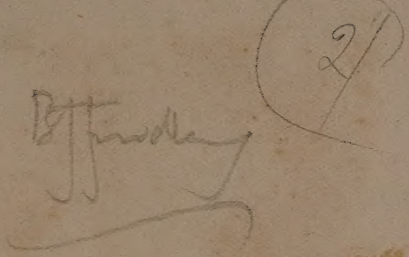
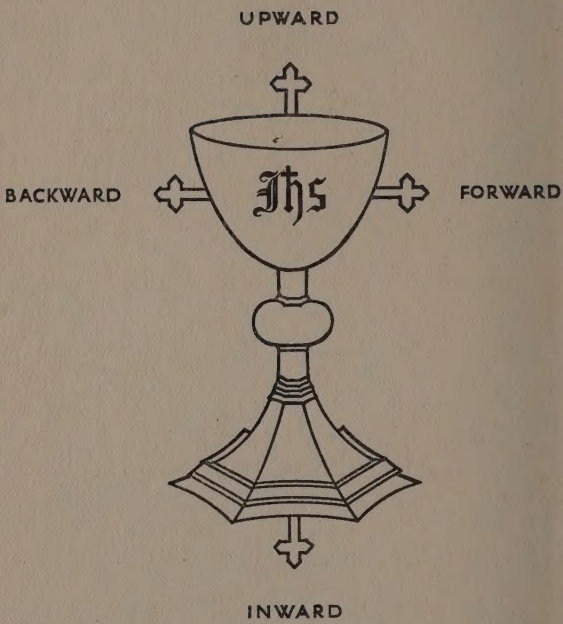


THE CALL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT


UPWARD
BACKWARD
IHS
FORWARD
INWARD

THE CALL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

BEING
RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLEXIONS
CONCERNING THE HOLY EUCHARIST

BY THE
REV. A. C. BUCHANAN, D.D.

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PREFACE

CANON LACEY, in the Author's Preface to *The Anglo-Catholic Faith*, writes: "It has often interested me to observe by what various paths men have been gathered into this movement from the heterogeneous mass of English Christianity."

I am only a very insignificant unit in the great multitude, yet, as having received so great blessings in the Church, I venture in real gratitude to set down certain recollections and reflexions concerning the very citadel of the Catholic Faith and experience, the Holy Eucharist. There can never be too much written or said in praise of this marvellous gift of God. The Catholic Church has, with a unanimity and devotion surely to be attributed to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, from the very beginning made it central in its plan of worship. Priests are ordained with a view, above all, to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. Baptized people are confirmed that they may, amongst other things, be qualified to receive Holy Communion. Penitents are absolved chiefly that they may draw near worthily to the altar of God. All services of prayer and praise tend to group themselves around it,

never to supplant it, as the Book of Common Prayer well proves. When men ponder earnestly on the deep things of God, they pay much attention to Holy Communion, as St. Thomas Aquinas, who penned the wonderful hymn "Lauda Sion"; John Wesley, when he pressed for at least a weekly reception of the Sacrament; and the Tractarians, when they restored the Lord's Service to its proper place in the religious life of our country.

The Blessed Sacrament is worthy of such honour. It preserves in a vital way the truth that God the Son did really come in our flesh and blood. It asserts God's claim on all the outward things of life, that all should be made sacramental. It proclaims our secret hope of victory over all the powers of evil. It is a constant call to personal holiness. It is our door of access to the Father.

The nourishment it affords is abundant as the infinite love of God. It cleanses us from the many lesser sins that impair our soul's health. It softens our hearts so apt to become hard and dry in a callous world. It is the Bread of life, for in It we feed on Christ Who is our Life. It is the Bread of angels, for they are nourished by the same Lord. It is our Daily Bread, for It enables for the duties of every day. It is the Children's Bread, ours by right as members of God's Family. It is our Manna, to sustain us in a life otherwise

a wilderness. It is our Food of Immortality, for by It we are building up "the body that shall be."

The Holy Eucharist sums up the meaning of Our Lord's Incarnate life, and shows what ours should be. The Bread is taken: He took our flesh: He claims us every day, body and soul.

The Bread is blessed: He consecrated our humanity in assuming it: He blessed us that we might be one with Him.

The Bread is broken: His Body was broken on the Tree, and is present on the altar as broken under the form of a sacrament, typical of His broken will, His broken heart: He demands as a condition of our communion that our self-will should be broken, our hearts broken in true contrition for sin.

The Sacrament in being consecrated is offered to the Father: Jesus presents It Himself: He demands the offering of our broken wills and hearts.

The Bread is given: He gives Himself to be our Food unto everlasting life: He claims that we should give ourselves for the service of our fellow-creatures.

The Bread is living: He died and rose that we might have a share in both His Death and Resurrection: He demands to live in us for ever.

The Bread comes down from heaven, and

our sacrifice rises thither, to be presented by Christ Ascended: He ascended to be our Mediator: He demands that we should "ascend in heart and mind, and with Him continually dwell."

The Bread is quickened by His Spirit: He sends Him as He promised: He demands that we should be filled with His Spirit always.

There is just One Bread of the Altar: He prays that we all may be one: we must not rest till all Christians are one again in Him.

The Bread is for all mankind: He is hungry till all come to Him: we must not rest till all the world knows the joy of coming into His Banqueting-house, over which floats the banner of His love.

The Holy Eucharist has stood the test of time. Other cults have come and gone. This rite stands secure. Theologians and philosophers have applied themselves to It, have defined and reasoned and criticized: It abides with us all the clearer and more intelligible, yet none the less the Holy Mystery. It has been submitted to the better test of Christian experience, and men feel about It, write about It, sing about It, as enthusiastically as in the early centuries of our Faith. Heresies have arisen about It. Men have misunderstood It, abused It, tried to evaporate Its

meaning. But still the Catholic Altar stands secure, founded in loyal hearts.

It was this Blessed Sacrament that called to me and brought me from a narrow groove of Protestantism into the serener, freer atmosphere of Catholicism. After fifteen years' service at the altars of the Scottish Episcopal Church I feel I can speak from some experience, and in gratitude bear my testimony. We enjoy many blessings in this part of the Anglican Communion, with our orthodox, sympathetic and accessible bishops, our very full and well-ordered Canon of the Mass, our liberty to reserve the Blessed Sacrament, our freedom to use "Devotions," and our generally high appreciation of the Holy Mysteries: these have doubtless contributed to make my lot a happy, if very strenuous, one.

I do not imagine that I have written a treatise on the Holy Eucharist. The chapters on Looking Backward, Upward, Inward and Forward, and Altar Lights, were written down afterwards as the substance of five addresses given on special occasions to a group of devout people. This accounts for some repetition which yet may serve a good purpose. For the Introductory Chapter I perhaps owe a very humble apology: it is so personal and intimate. But it was only in this way that I could show how I was drawn on from stage

to stage by the powerful attraction of the Sacrament of Our Lord's Body and Blood, and, in this simple fashion of telling, my experience may prove of interest to some and, if God will permit it, of help to others.

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THE CALL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

I

THE CALL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Introductory Chapter,

Being Some Personal Reminiscences Concerning the Lord's Supper as Viewed and Celebrated in Different Places and in Different Communions.

As an introduction to what follows in this book concerning the Lord's Own Service, I have thought it might be of interest to many, and especially this year when so many Christians are joining to celebrate the glories of the Holy Eucharist, if I set down some personal reminiscences connected with Our Saviour's holy Institution. About thirty-five years ago I was as a little boy settled in a certain district in the North of Ireland, where I attended a Presbyterian "Meeting-house": it was never

called "church." I do not suppose there was any thought of connecting it with the ancient term of "synaxis" (or "meeting") that in primitive times described the services of Christians. Twice a year there was "held" the "Communion Season." Wednesday and Friday were "Fast Days," not in the way of food, for more and better fare than ordinary was usually provided on these "occasions." A service at midday was held, when a "strange" minister came to preach and conduct a service. I seem to remember that very few of the sermons dealt specially with the coming Sunday "communion," or with self-examination or humiliation. Perhaps we were uncharitable, but we used to conclude that the preacher had simply brought what he thought was his best sermon, while we wondered sometimes, perhaps, what the worst ones could be like. Most of the Presbyterian farmers had no work done except that ordinarily regarded as necessary on a Sunday, and people hung about rather uncomfortably, I used to think, through the long afternoons and evenings. On Sunday at twelve (noon) the communion service began. It opened with the Lord's Prayer, which was never used except at that service. Then, after a metrical psalm, the Ten Commandments were read from the book Exodus, followed by a long general prayer. Another metrical psalm was

succeeded by a sermon of about forty minutes, also of a perfectly general nature. More psalm-singing was followed by the "fencing of the tables," which consisted in a skilful stringing together of isolated texts from the Old Testament and the New, joined up by a running commentary, something like this: "We are encouraged to-day to come to the Lord's Table by the invitation contained in the fifty-fifth chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah: 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' But lest any should come unworthily let us remember words from the following chapter: 'Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment and do justice.' Not that repentant sinners should be dismayed, for is it not written by the same prophet, 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool'? . . . These are they who are forbidden to approach the Table of the Lord, those of whom the psalmist says, 'Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.' 'He travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.' . . . Our Lord speaks of the same when, in Matthew's Gospel, He declares: 'I was an

hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.' Paul describes their works in the fifth chapter of the Galatians, when he says: 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.' . . . But these are they who may come, those of whom it is written 'the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Our Lord describes them when He says, in the fifth chapter of Matthew: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed,' etc. . . . Paul describes their works in the passage of Galatians before referred to when he says, 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.' Unto all such 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'" This is a very much shortened but typical form of the "fencing." Then a portion of the metrical version of Psalm cxvi was sung:

I'll of salvation take the Cup,
On God's Name will I call.
I'll pay my vows now to the Lord,
Before His people all—etc.

During the singing, part of the congregation filed out of the very high and straight-backed pews, to sit on either side of long, narrow "tables" placed for the day down the two passages of the building, covered with a white cloth. A short "table" in front of the pulpit was likewise draped, at which usually sat only two or three, who, I am afraid, were regarded as "the quality." The "elders" put on the small table four huge goblets of wine and two large platters of bread. There were usually three "tables" of communicants, perhaps fifty or near it at each. Two gallons of wine in an earthenware jar stood under a seat near the pulpit, and was poured with a huge gurgle into a large flagon, and thence into the cups. The bread was shortbread, about three-quarters of an inch thick, and made with dents so as to break off fairly evenly into squares of about an inch or so, and large quantities were set out, taken there and then from a large tin box. When all were seated, an address of some twenty minutes or half an hour was given, freely interspersed with "anecdotes." Then came a prayer, chiefly, I think, for grace to do well and of thanksgiving for all mercies. Then the minister said something like this:

"And now we are about to do what the Lord commanded. 'For,' as Paul, in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, writes, 'I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks' (as we already have done in his name), 'he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.'" The minister broke the bread, and gave a large portion to each of those at the small table, from which they broke a small square and ate it. The elders lifted the platters and placed them on the long side-tables, where they were passed along, each breaking off and eating a square. Meantime the minister continued: "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." As the minister said the words he lifted a cup and handed it to the nearest communicant, who passed it to his neighbour. The elders placed two cups on each of the side-tables, and each person drank a certain quantity (with many it must have been a good deal, as so much was required to serve all). When all had received in silence, another address was given of fair length, chiefly, I think, an exhortation to try to do better. Then part of

Psalm ciii, to the tune "Coleshill," was sung, while those who had received went back to their seats, or out to the "grave-yard," as it was called, to partake of a "piece"—not that they were "fasting," but it was now about two o'clock, or later, and long since breakfast. Others took their places meanwhile, and the steps of a fast horse would sound out, telling of the coming of a "strange" minister from some neighbouring place, perhaps five or six miles off, who drove over after his own midday service. He simply "carried on" as before, with an address before and after each receiving, but with no more prayers, and, I think, no repetition of the words of Institution. His addresses were usually replete with anecdotes, but as a large number of the ministers had bought about the same time copies of the *Biblical Anecdotist* we usually knew the stories, and they had not much "punch" in them. Our hopes would be aroused, as children, by the words, "A good story is told of . . ."—only to be dashed as we heard again and yet again of the hole in the Dutch dyke. The strange minister, too, was fresh, while we were not, so that I fear, if we had dared confess it, we were often bored to desolation. I remember that our "strange" ministers were often men of diminutive stature, for whom a moderately sized stool was provided. Once a very prosy

divine, who always wore a pained smile and always recounted the same anecdotes, overbalanced himself and disappeared, and when he was hoisted up again was much flustered, poor man, and "cut it short." For a long time we youngsters had great hopes of that stool, but it never repeated its kind office. When the last table had received, all flocked back into the building for the "Closing Address," which usually lasted an hour, and was followed by Psalm xxiii (metrical) and a blessing. In my early days the service was over about 4 p.m., having previously lasted on to sometimes six. My whole impression is of a solemn service, very sad, arousing much misgiving as to personal worthiness, and leaving us rather distinctly glad that it was all over for another six months. As throwing light on the ideas prevailing about any "consecration" of the "elements," I recollect that the crumbs were thrown out to the birds when the service was over, and that what was left of bread and wine was often consumed by some who had come from afar and had not gone out to the grave-yard. Any idea of the bread or wine being consecrated bread or wine was entirely absent, and the wine was drunk from the cups used at the service, what was left in them and more added.

* * * * *

My next set of recollections are connected with a Presbyterian church in Belfast, where there was an exceptionally scholarly and hard-working minister, with a congregation chiefly composed of decent artisans. The "communions" were quarterly, and the service was much shorter than in the country, only lasting an hour and a half, or a little more, but there was a continuation later on in the afternoon, at three o'clock, I think. There was no "table," save a small one in front of the pulpit, but the book boards in the seats were covered with linen cloths. The people received as they sat in their pews, and passed round a slice of ordinary baker's bread, from which each broke a bit, and then passed round a cup. Elders brought bread and cup to the end of each pew. There was only one address before and after, and there was almost no "fencing of the table." It was there I "took communion" first, and I remember no great impression being made on me of having received anything special or of having offered any special worship, but only a general sense that I would need to try and do better, with a certain feeling of relief that it was all over for awhile. On the whole, I think the people were earnest and felt solemnized, but that was all. The thought of the Death predominated: that of the Resurrection was almost wholly absent.

* * * * *

I had reached the stage of being an assistant minister (or "probationer"), and went to a large industrial town in the West of Scotland. The minister under whom I served was "one of the best," and himself exceedingly reverent; but, though the communion service was carried through with great care, I did not find so much apparent solemnity as I had been accustomed to. The bread was prepared from an ordinary loaf cut into fingers, which were all blessed on a communion table standing in front of a chancel occupied by a huge organ and large mixed choir, partly screened by a lofty pulpit. The form of service used was practically that prepared by the (Established) "Church Service Society," and contained in a book called the *Euchologion*. The fingers of bread were passed along from hand to hand, each breaking off a piece, and I think many crumbs fell by the way. On the whole it would be fair to say that there was a little more æsthetic sense among many than I had been used to, but less real reverence. I remember I caused some commotion when I (who, as "unordained," had no official part in the service) insisted beforehand that the minister himself should communicate me and not one of the "elders."

* * * * *

A year later I had a parish of my own, and was an ordained Presbyterian minister. I

succeeded an old man, who lived on for some time in the parish, and who in early life had been much influenced by Keble's *Christian Year*. For example, I heard him say, "In delivering you this bread and cup I am giving you, not common bread and wine, but in a sacrament the Lord's Body and Blood"; and he prayed that God might "sanctify these elements of bread and wine." Yet over against that must be set these facts: (1) When saying "grace" he used the phrase, "Sanctify these gifts for our use"; (2) the cups when empty were replenished by the elders from a huge flagon standing at the other side of the church; (3) the "beadle" told me that when the people went out of church he had to go round and gather up great slices of bread which had been dropped here and there on the floor; (4) what was left in the cups and in the flagon was put back into the wine bottles and sent to some of the sick poor. The old minister, by the way, made a great point of each communicant *breaking* the bread for himself.

Immediately I instituted certain changes. I cut up the bread into very small dices, as the custom was in many parts of the country; mingled water with the wine in the vestry; used the Liturgical Epistle and Gospel as Lessons; during the singing of Psalm xxiv, retired with the elders and "brought forward" the elements in procession to a table in

front of the pulpit in accordance with a custom common in Scotland as in the East; wore over my Geneva gown a black stole with gold crosses; used the Nicene Creed, and compiled a very full form of "consecration"; taught clearly the doctrine of the Real Presence; had all the wine, flagon, and cups to be used on the table; at the "fraction" placed a particle of Bread in the Cup; communicated the elders individually; handed to them and received back from them patens and cups; consumed what was left of the Bread and carefully poured out the considerable quantity of Wine left over in the churchyard, and cleansed the cups. The last action caused much comment, especially that "I was robbing the poor," and that "I was following the Roman Catholic practice of communicating the dead"!

In course of time a beautiful new church was built, with chancel, handsome marble "altar," stalls for the "elders," etc., and a monthly communion at 8.30 a.m. was begun, which some ten or twelve out of nearly five hundred communicants used to attend and appreciate.

I always kept my fast, though when assisting a neighbour it used sometimes to mean breakfast at 4 p.m.! There was certainly, on the whole, great reverence shown, though I doubt if many either understood or accepted

the teaching. A remark once made sticks in my mind. I had insisted on a Communion on Easter Day, before quite unknown. A few were up in arms on the ground that "there was no such thing as Easter." A dear old Highland elder defended me by saying: "It's not as if we were making a festival of it as the English Church people do: we are making it a sad day by having the memorial of a Death." Another incident occurs to me, a pleasant one. A campaign against my "ways" was instituted as a newspaper "stunt." On Easter Day special reporters were sent to gain matter for a slashing article. They returned with no notes, and declared: "We dared not take any notes: the whole service was more reverent than anything we have ever seen." Even the shadow of Catholicism would seem to have great force.

* * * * *

Once I was asked by a dear friend of a thoroughly Catholic turn of mind to go and assist him at his half-yearly communion in a far-away Highland parish. The church was quite full, with perhaps two hundred people, some of whom had come twenty-six miles on a bitter day in November. The service was practically an adaptation of the Liturgy of St. James, all carefully memorized. The greatest solemnity and reverence prevailed.

I imagine that the language difficulty (most were used to speaking Gaelic in ordinary conversation) prevented many from following everything. When the time to receive came, none did so but my friend and myself, his sister and a schoolmaster from a distance, who had come to lead the psalm-singing. Over it all there hung a terrible atmosphere of sadness, and I came away feeling I had been taking part in a tragedy of absolutely unrelieved gloom. In fact, the paucity of communicants was traced to the "zeal" of a former generation of Free Church preachers who used to boast of having so touched the consciences of the people that they had frightened away all but six or eight of twenty from "the tables"! Yet the alleged feeling of "unworthiness" was often, I felt, far from being genuine. For example, my friend had often tried to persuade one good woman to receive, but always she said, "O, I am not worthy: I am a wicked woman." At first he would say, "O, you are not a wicked woman," but one day he began, "I know you are a wicked woman, but——" At once she broke out, "I'm not a wicked woman at all, but as for those that go to the tables . . ." It was significant.

* * * * *

One of the great defects in the work of parishes generally was the great lack of teaching

" first communicants " that generally prevailed. Very commonly three short classes were deemed ample, though many of the candidates knew almost nothing of systematic doctrine, and had the haziest imaginable ideas about religion. I seldom met any who ever read the Holy Scriptures for themselves, at least of the younger generation. Often no special teaching at all was given, and I have known of a casual intimation like this being made: " Jean, it's time you were at the tables : there's a 'token' to you " (a " token " being a metal " coin " collected by the elders on plates before the " communion "). I was considered over-zealous because I insisted on six or eight lessons of an hour each with devotional exercises.

* * * * *

Moving here and there over Scotland, I gathered that in very few places was any special care taken for the disposal of what was left over of the elements ; no irreverence being intended because no thought existed of any sacredness attaching to them. One of our leading churchmen told me a few years ago that he had been informed by one of the ablest of the parish ministers of the younger generation, descendant of a long line of notable ministers, that they had no idea of any " consecration " of the elements in our

sense. Nor was there any idea of the Lord's Supper being a "sacrifice," or an act of worship: it was something that people did *in memoriam*, eating and drinking and remembering Christ's death in their hearts and renewing their resolves to serve Him. Among the earnest there was a great desire that the people should be impressed, but not, as far as I could gather, any particular aim that God should be glorified. Perhaps this might be succinctly described by saying that the service was aimed manward rather than Godward. On this ground many earnest ministers opposed frequent communion because this frequency would render the service less impressive.

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From the closing days of my Divinity course in Edinburgh University, where I can remember no great stress being laid on the Sacraments, I had been much exercised about what Our Lord meant by "This is My Body," and about the real significance of the service. This only came home to me with real force, however, when I began to use the words myself. I read the works of Dr. Sprott, Professor Milligan, Professor Cooper, Dr. Wotherspoon, and other leaders of the "High Church" party, as many called them. I was much stirred in 1899 and 1900 with visions of "Reunion." I thought then that if we could

agree about what the Holy Communion was, all would be well. Now I think the difficulties are specially concerned with the very elements of the Catholic Faith.

* * * * *

I had many glimpses of another view of things than the Presbyterian. My mind goes back to my childhood's days when from my bedroom window I could see through the often wide-open door of a Roman Catholic church the whole interior. The altar ablaze with lights and the large kneeling crowds sent a kind of thrill through me, though I was clearly taught that, compared to us, they were poor superstitious people kept in darkness by a race of priests for their own purposes. "Yet," I thought, "there is something there we have not got: is there perhaps some great truth amidst all the superstition?"

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In 1899 I spent a few days in Killarney with a friend, and one Sunday evening we wandered into the huge Roman Catholic church just as they were beginning the "O Salutaris Hostia." I had no idea what it was all about. But I saw a huge crowd, the great church packed to overflowing with kneeling people, old men and little children, young men and mothers with babies in their arms. The altar

and reredos were one glow of light, and great white clouds of incense rose up. Every eye was on the altar. All joined in the singing of a litany. Then, as the "Tantum ergo" rolled out and the monstrance was elevated and the bell rung, in a tremendous hush every head bent low, and I thought at once of the great White Throne and One upon it with glory round about Him as of a rainbow. I came away with my companion in utter silence, feeling that I had been for a moment in a strange land of mystery, very beautiful and very restful, and that would not bear talking about.

* * * * *

Another time, I think in 1906, I happened to be in Dublin in the beginning of June, and called, as I sometimes did, on one of my old English teachers, then a Professor in a Roman Catholic institution. It was the eve of Corpus Christi, and, as I had never seen a procession on that day, I asked if there was such a thing in the city. He kindly arranged for me to go out next day with a young friend of his, one of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, to Mount Annville, near Dundrum, four miles or so from Dublin. It was a glorious afternoon. There were probably five thousand people in the lovely convent grounds. A band of some two or three hundred girls in white led the

way with bouquets of flowers, which they strewed on the path. There was a huge choir of boys and men, and perhaps forty or fifty priests. Under a splendid canopy carried by four priests, and preceded by clouds of incense, came the Host, borne by the parish priest in shining cope. There was not a sound save the hum of bees in the orchard's abundant blossom in the intervals between the hymns. Five " stations " were made at different shrines, and all knelt on the grass or the walks as the Host was elevated, and everyone joined in a soul-stirring " Tantum ergo." Two little children, a girl of about six and a boy of about four, knelt in front of me. The little boy whispered at the first station as the monstrance flashed in the sunlight, " Mary, what is it ? " " Hush, Gerald," she replied, " it is Jesus," and both bowed to the very ground. The last station was made at a huge altar, all built up and covered with roses and other flowers, and elevated some fifteen or twenty feet. High up against the clear blue sky for the last time the monstrance flashed, and all the world seemed to stand still for a glorious moment. There was no doubt about the Real Presence. Jesus was in the midst of them, and at any rate for the time every heart was drawn to Him. Afterwards I tried to analyse it all, allowing for the beauty of the day and the place, the sweet mingling of incense and flower per-

fumes, the gorgeous vestments, the great band of white-clad, white-veiled children, the suggestion of a crowd; but the thing that remained was the little girl's "Hush, Gerald, it is Jesus."

* * * * *

One year at Pentecost I found myself at the last Mass in Gardiner Street Church, Dublin. The great building was thronged to the door. There was an eloquent preacher, who fervently set forth the work of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the Church. But what held me was the service. Here were some twelve hundred or so of people, largely of the better-educated classes, occupied in something quite unearthly. The celebrant was not addressing himself to the people. He faced with them Godward. He lifted up Something to the Father. All hearts were as one in a common act of worship, and the Throne of God seemed very near. Any idea of being edified was for the moment entirely swallowed up in a much larger conception. At the same time those present seemed perfectly at home. I think I gained there a new idea of the supernaturalness combined with the homeliness of the Catholic Religion.

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One week-end I exchanged duty with a neighbouring minister, and had to spend it

in solitariness in his house. I found in his study a copy of Father Dolling's enthralling book, *Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum*. What held me most was his marked devotion to the Sacrament of the Altar combined with his Evangelical fervour, and the marvellous response of a class regarded as hopeless to the sacramental appeal. It all stood out vividly before me, and from that day I knew I must make sure of this most central and vital thing in the Catholic Religion. In spite of many crudities, the book carried conviction and advanced me miles on my way to my goal. A hundred times it came back to my mind, and always its call was from and to the Sacrament of the Altar.

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One morning I received a pamphlet circulated by a vigorous Protestant agitator describing with huge capitals and wonderful pictures the services in a well-known Scottish Episcopal church, quoting largely and denouncing everything as "blasphemous," etc. Its chief fury was directed against "the Mass." Its author was a Presbyterian minister who showed little sympathy with and less understanding of what was going on. His damnatory remarks I paid no heed to, but his quotations and descriptions I found most helpful, and I gained still more insight into the sacramental life

generally, and felt still more clearly the call of the Blessed Sacrament. I read and thought more deeply than ever of the matter. I sometimes wonder if that departed Protestant protagonist knows, wherever he now is, how much he helped me on my pilgrimage.

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All the time I was pursuing my studies in the midst of a somewhat full life of many duties incident to my office. I was finding out how very, very few of my ministerial brethren believed in anything approaching the doctrine of the Real Presence, or indeed showed much appreciation of the sacramental principle. More and more they seemed to lay stress on mere ethical teaching, and on what men could and ought to do. One seldom heard of the grace of God, and never, I think, of the Holy Communion as being the normal Food of the soul. I think the word "Pelagian" would be fairly descriptive of the attitude of very many. At last, after a long and painful struggle, I became convinced (1) that I could no longer honestly eat the bread of Presbyterianism, and especially that I was altogether out of sympathy with official and representative Presbyterian teaching about the Blessed Sacrament and Ordination; (2) that I could no longer look for a continuance of those blessings I had undoubtedly received as long as I could use

Presbyterian rites with a good conscience; (3) that the exclusive Papal claims, especially as to jurisdiction, could not be substantiated from history, though magnificent achievements and hosts of saints stood to the credit of the Roman Catholic Communion; (4) that, while perfection could not be even expected till true unity should again prevail in Christendom, the Anglican Communion could offer me valid orders, a secure Eucharist, a full use of all the Sacraments, and a broad, sane, and devotional outlook on life generally. I had been present at many Anglican services, very simple ones, and some more elaborate, and knew both their reverence and their peace and inspiration. My first communion was made on a Whit-Sunday shortly before my ordination to the diaconate, and neither then nor since have I had any doubts as to the validity or reality of our Eucharist. I think one of the very most joyful moments of my life was when I celebrated for the first time the Holy Mysteries on Christmas midnight, 1912, in a little Mission Church in Edinburgh, with a fierce hurricane of wind and rain outside tearing round the building, but inside perfect peace, the altar decked by loving hands with Christmas lilies, a devout congregation of working people thronging the building, and all singing sweet hymns of the Holy Infant. Immediately after the Consecration and the Agnus the very

angels seemed to be joining in the "O come all ye faithful." I had found my Holy Grail, and knew that all along what had been calling me was this, the Blessed Eucharist.

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For over thirteen years now I have been rector of a suburban church, and for most of that time have acted also as chaplain in a Rescue Home in the parish. I have tried all along to make it what one might call a ministry of the Blessed Sacrament. There has developed in this way a spirit of deeper reverence and of very real devotion to Our Lord, especially on the part of the young. It is a great joy to see the number of children and older people who come Sunday by Sunday at ten o'clock to sing heartily and worship devoutly at what is a real Parish Mass, and a Parish Communion too, for we average at that celebration alone some fifty communions. The greatest inspiration of my own life is the daily Mass with its steady band of faithful supporters. I try to start out each time in parochial visitation from the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved: I just tell Our Lord about those I am going to see, and beg to be allowed to carry some influence, some message, from Him to His children. Again and again I have had notable answers to that prayer: doubts have disappeared, the

hardened have been moved, wanderers have been brought back. Penitents present themselves in a constant stream because they have come to know how holy is the Presence they seek to bring into their hearts. Sorrowful and heavy-hearted folk, people glad because of blessings given them, come of themselves, alone in the Presence, or at the daily Eucharist, to tell Our Lord all about it.

In the Rescue Home, where expert visitors tell us there is going on one of the best bits of work of the kind in the kingdom under the direction of some Sisters of the Community of St. Peter, Horbury, the centre of all is the Blessed Sacrament. It has converted, inspired, built up whole successions of girls who go out to meet life in a new spirit and with a new courage. After a short time in the Home we find the girls using part of their leisure time in going to the chapel and kneeling there before the Tabernacle: it is just there that many of them have fought out their fierce, inward battles and have found peace. I have no right to set down any details of many of their victories, but these girls, my very dear children in Christ, would like me to bear this testimony. Any day they will rise earlier or work late for the privilege of being allowed to come and sing, correctly, heartily, and reverently, with no accompaniment, their beautiful Plainsong Mass. Visitors have again

and again been much touched by it. Nor is there wanting palpable fruit, for at the same time we find them moved to real generosity and self-denial that they may help any good cause, and making altogether new efforts to reconcile all quarrels and differences.

Lastly, amongst the people generally, both in the church and in the Home, there prevails a spirit of true gaiety and what I may call "supernatural cheerfulness," and this, too, I set down to the Presence of Him Who not only wept by the grave of Lazarus, but shared at Cana the joy of a marriage-feast.

II

LOOKING BACKWARD

1.

I WANT to set down very simply and directly certain impressions made upon me in celebrating the Lord's Own Service. Just as with other of our very dear friends, we have many names for this service. We call it the "Lord's Supper" because we look back to the "Last Supper," when our dear Saviour gathered a few close friends to entertain them with the most wonderful Banquet the world can ever know. He is the Departing Friend, but He presides, provides, and, fittingly, bequeaths. He catches up all the treasures of human companionship and Divine fellowship, and makes it a "Holy Communion." He presents in Himself the very epitome and crown of all Divine beneficence, and constitutes in His Institution the most expressive of all giving of thanks, the "Holy Eucharist" (or "Thanksgiving"). He chooses, as a very central action, to take and break the Bread, and many, fixing on that, called the whole service the "Breaking of Bread." He leaves it to His

own as such a solemn responsibility as well as privilege that many to this day describe it as the "Divine Liturgy" (or "bounden duty Godward"). But perhaps the dearest name of all for many of us is the pet name, like the pet name of a big family for the youngest child, I mean the "Mass." Like all pet names, it arose from a kind of accident. A little child mispronounces a word, or someone in a delightfully silly outburst of tenderness utters just a meaningless sound, and at once it acquires a tender significance and sticks. A kind priest, wishing to let the people know a service was over, and that they might depart when they wished, said, "Ite; missa est" ("Go; it is over"); others repeated it, and "Missa," or "Mass," at length, attached itself as an affectionate term to the holy rite of the Eucharist. It has written itself into our beloved festivals of Christmas and Michaelmas, of Marymass and Candlemas and Martinmas; it remains in our somewhat intriguing term "Lammas." Somehow it seems to gather up a world of tenderness and joy, to touch human experience at its most pregnant moments, to fit in as appropriately in a Mass of Thanksgiving for a birth as in a Mass of Requiem for one departed, in a Nuptial Mass for those newly wed, as in a Mass for the Propagation of the Faith.

The outward trappings of the service vary

from age to age, and from place to place, yet certain essentials remain constant.

This is important from the point of view of *remembrance*. There are some few people of austere dispositions who are perhaps more impressed by just a bare wooden table with a sparse linen covering, and never a flower or light or picture at hand. But most of us are susceptible to an environment of simple beauty. When we celebrate the home-coming after long absence of a dear friend, we put out the finest linen and silver, provide the best viands, kindle a fire and many lights, and put on our best attire: we create thus a festive atmosphere. So when we come to celebrate the Holy Mass, especially on solemn occasions, we are accustomed to provide plenty of flowers, bright lights around the altar, very probably clouds of incense to rise in a mist of glory in the holy place seeming to bear our offerings visibly up to heaven, clothe our priests in rich, silk vestments, and lift many a banner in glad procession round God's house. Yet we are fully conscious that this is only the setting of our precious Jewel, the Lord's own simple Institution. The setting has its valued uses, for it enables us to express in action and gift as well as in word and thought our thanksgiving and praise, and, indeed, reacts upon us so as to call forth from us our very best of adoration and worship.

The central acts of Jesus were simple. There was a table ready, furnished, we may be sure, by Our Lord's kind host with the very fairest of linen, with softly burning lamps, with shining vessels containing the unleavened cake and the wine mingled with a little water. He goes to His place in a solemn hush; He takes the bread, and, looking up to God after the custom in giving of thanks, blesses, saying, "This is My Body . . ." He takes the Cup in like fashion and blesses, saying, "This is My Blood . . ." He says, "Do this in remembrance of Me." He breaks and distributes the Bread, and gives to all the Sacred Cup. It is with these simple central facts that we are specially concerned. All else is valuable up to a point, especially perhaps as an attempt to reproduce in part the historic circumstances of the Institution, and to secure a continuous tradition in the matter, but it is the essentials that are most precious. I like the story of the dear old saint of God, who, dying and unable to rise from his recumbent posture, celebrated the Holy Mysteries on his own breast, and so communicated himself and those around his bed.

2.

I want to keep specially prominent for the moment the words, "In Remembrance," or,

as we might render the original language, " For My Memorial."

It is Memory that connects our lives and makes of them a unity. But for Memory and all implied in it, I should be for an instant and then cease to be, and next instant another " I " should come into being. Memory saves my life from being a succession of fragments. We have come to know that any appearance of fragmentariness there is in our lives arises from the temporarily sunk memories of the subconscious, which can be brought to the surface by the proper stimuli. Our Lord desired that the life of His Church should be an unbroken, conscious Memory.

I suppose most people are in danger of forgetting two things especially, their sins and the benefits they have received. It is almost proverbial that most people confuse the forgetting of their own sins with their forgiveness, and there is some truth in the cynical saying about gratitude's being a lively sense of favours to come, implying that, when the need of such favours does not press upon us, we are in danger of forgetting the benefits past. I remember, too, speaking to a widow whose beloved husband had died a good many years before. She said something like this to me: " When first he died I thought my heart would break. Always my sorrow was there when I fell asleep, and when I awoke it was

waiting for me. Time passed, and it became less poignant, and now, alas, I am beginning to forget. I long to have my old anguish back, if only I might have the same vivid memory of *him*." There was a very tragedy of forgetting. All this has its bearing on Our Lord's "In Remembrance." As long as we remember His Cross and Passion, we must remember the thick darkness of our sins. As long as we remember the love that brought Him to His pains, we cannot forget the thanks we owe. As long as we remember in detail the tender compassion of every act in His Tragedy, a vivid sense of His Person and love will fill our hearts.

In the Old Testament there stand out many memorials. The Deuteronomist is never weary of warning the people "lest they should forget." The prophets keep reminding them of their past. In a sense, Israel and the Jews lived in the past, yet in such a manner as to gather from it their hopes for the future. They had discovered the great facts that God's goodness is part of His character, not consisting in a series of acts, done once and then over. Because He did choose them, call them, guide them, discipline them, He will perfect His work for them. So their memorials were anticipations also. Think of the feast of Purim (or "the Lots"), commemorating the deliverance poetically recounted in the Book

of Esther. On the very verge of a universal massacre, God intervened and His people were saved. So, as year by year they kept the feast in holy memory, they know God could and would deliver His faithful remnant in every peril. Or think of the Passover, that greatest of Jewish Feasts, which, indeed, gave a kind of model for its Christian antitype, the Holy Eucharist. It is an acted memorial of the wonderful deliverance when from Egypt God brought their fathers out and made them a nation. So the Jewish year was strewn with holy memorials that linked their lives with the past and with God, and set them courageously to face the future.

In the Holy Communion we have this thought of Remembrance running throughout, not confining itself to Our Lord's express words, "This do in remembrance of Me." We commemorate all His mercies. We say, "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee." We place ourselves in the historic circumstances when we say, "Who on the same night that He was betrayed," and the night of His wondrous Passion comes again to view; "This is My Body which is given for you," and Calvary has moved forward into our midst; "This is My Blood . . ." and the red Blood flows before our mind's eye. And in the Anamnesis

(or Memorial), present in many of our liturgies, we make mention of "His blessed passion and precious death, His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension . . . the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same" . . . and we call upon His Spirit's dower to make this a living Memorial. Indeed, the old language of the Church Catechism strikes a true note when it says that "the Lord's Supper was ordained for the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the death of Christ."

3.

A LIVING Memorial! Yes, it is not a mere thought or emotion. We do make a certain mental effort to recall all or some of the circumstances. We use our imagination to see the whole sacrifice pass again before our eyes. We do stir up our hearts' emotions, and let them be moved and thrilled by the sight of Divine Love Crucified: "Jesus, my Love, is crucified." But that is far from being the whole, or indeed being the chief part, of our Remembrance. Bare remembrance is largely achieved in many a meditation, sermon, picture, sometimes much more vividly than in the Mass. Our memory here is a *living* memory: it is a drama; it is actualized; it is something done; it is a re-presentation. The Upper-room is here again. Calvary is

alive with its crowd of enemies. He died then by the separation of His Precious Blood drained from His Holy Body. Here now on the altar this separation is mystically made. Separately first the bread is consecrated, and it becomes His Body, and the wine is consecrated separately and becomes His Blood. The separation is not through His actually being crucified again, but there is great mystery of perpetual mystical crucifixion, for the Victim is present as crucified though living. We are conscious that our concern in the service is not nearly so much with what is being said as with what is being done: we are present at the great Divine Drama of Infinite Love just as much as if we saw the black cross athwart the sky and heard the hoarse cries, "He saved others: Himself He cannot save." Ah, no, love can never save itself; it can only sacrifice itself; and here, we know it, He is sacrificing Himself still.

It is a *living* Memory because He is really here, not here in a figure or a make-believe. I think there is a perfect tragedy in realizing, as we recall very many sermons we have heard about the Holy Communion, or recall, perhaps, many of our own old thoughts about it, that what some well-meaning but misguided teachers, and what we ourselves, were trying to do was to explain away a great reality, leaving ourselves at last only a morsel

of bread and a sup of wine, and a loving memory in our hearts perhaps. I cannot believe our Lord would have mocked us with that. I cannot believe that His Spirit-filled and Spirit-led Church should have given us in our holiest moments of worship just a morsel of bread and a sup of wine and a memory of a past. I recall St. John's report of Our Lord's teaching after the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Jesus is the true manna. He will give them His Flesh to eat. "How can He?" cry the doubting Jews. Surely Our Lord would have been bound to safeguard His friends from the terrible error (for it would have been terrible if an error) of believing that they would indeed receive His Body and Blood as their meat and drink if He had not meant it. Instead He emphasizes it. "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." The Church has quite definitely and practically unanimously applied that clear teaching to our holy Service of Remembrance. It teaches quite clearly that "there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body," and that Our Lord's Body, though not on the altar in the state in which it was on Calvary, yet is actually there under the forms of Bread and Wine after a heavenly and spiritual manner. The Church does not explain the Presence. That would be impossible, for it is a mystery

transcending human reason, but, thank God, not transcending the powers of human faith and love. Christ offered us "living Bread": withdraw His Presence, and it is dead Bread, with no power to sustain, no value as an offering "in remembrance." Moreover, St. Paul, whose accounts are now received as reliable evidence of the belief of the Church in its very early days, makes it all as clear and definite as words can do. "The Bread which we break is a participation in the Body of Christ": "the Cup which we bless is a participation in the Blood of Christ." It must have meant the deepest conviction of the truth of Our Lord's actual Presence when St. Paul, a strict Jew brought up to hate the very idea of partaking of blood, for whom, as for all Jews, the blood had to be all drained from the flesh before that flesh would be eaten, could speak so startlingly about "drinking blood."

Our Lord's own words in the Institution come to us with absolute clearness amidst all minor variations: He did clearly speak of His Body and His Blood, "This is My Body." "This is My Blood" . . . and He, too, was a Jew knowing a Jew's abhorrence of blood. So I cannot believe that He would either wantonly offend a pious Jew or mock a humble-hearted, faithful Christian by using those words if He did not really mean them,

and in a simple, direct sense such as a child might well receive. And the childlike do so interpret Our Lord's words. Throughout all the world, Sunday by Sunday, millions kneel before the altar, and what one moment is a loving memory of Him Who gave Himself to be offered for them on the Cross nigh two thousand years ago becomes a living memory, a vivid realization of One actually there after the Consecration: the memory of God comes to aid the memory of man and re-creates the past as the most vital present: the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ is there, the same Victim, offering Himself with the same love, with the same wounds, with the same unfathomed merit. This multitude of worshippers, who devoutly follow all the acts and words of the celebrant and make them their own, include gentle and simple, ignorant and learned, the aged and little children, of every nation, of every stage of civilization, of every profession and occupation, of every temperament and disposition—one only in this, their realization of a living Memorial, the Crucified Saviour, in their midst. These are the successors of many generations who have gone before, and include among them the world's greatest scholars, discoverers, philanthropists. They are not bound in one by the mere recollection of a great past combined with the presence of a mere morsel of bread

and a sup of wine: they are bound together by the common love of One Who suffers Himself to respond in Person to their loving memory enacting His own appointed drama, presenting Himself in the culminating act of His redeeming love as sacrificed on the Cross.

4.

So when day by day I stand before the altar, I realize a tremendous responsibility, and yet know my own nothingness. The vestments of Memory are on me that blot out my individuality. I am less than nothing, for I just represent the one true Priest. The same dear Lord, Who, in the same night that He was betrayed, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, condescends to use my sinful hands as part of His larger Incarnate Body, the Church, and by them takes the bread. My voice He uses as His voice to say "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood," and in a Memory that bridges time, mocks at time, transcends time, the Past becomes Present, and Jesus is giving Himself for me. The earthly priest changes as the years go by, but the Priesthood of Christ abides, and the history of all that is best in the world is assembled in the Memory of the altar: there is no real succession: the moment of Sacrifice is eternal, and in a Divine Memory past,

present, and future are merged in one glorious Offering.

We draw freely upon our imagination, our thought, our faith, yet here is no mere reconstruction in imagination of a Heroism past all heroisms, nor a devout thought of what God did once in the dim past to redeem His sin-stained feeble children, nor a humble faith in a Divine outburst of tender love. No, the Sacrificed is here by an act of His own will, Who gives His Crucified Body in its spiritual and glorified state under the forms of Bread and Wine. There is no other Remembrance in all the world like this, though in a sense it challenges us to realize that there is nothing really past in all our experience except forgiven sin, and even then the sense of forgiveness lives on.

It may help us to appreciate this living Memory if we approach the Mystery in this fashion. Let us suppose ourselves before the altar. We go far away in space and time, and find ourselves asleep in a warm sheep-skin, with a few humble shepherds outside the little town of Bethlehem, beneath the silence of the star-lit sky. On the silence comes a stirring, and, awake, we see new brightness in the sky, and hear the Glory-song of angels, and follow as they lead the way down the hillside to yonder stable-cave. We run eagerly and kneel there with the faithful shepherds and

St. Joseph, and behold a beautiful Baby cradled on the bosom of the holy Peasant Maid. We are only a few, but soon, as years come and go, there gather round us the multitudes of those who from the earliest days have kept Christmas-tide, priest and monks and nuns, kings and counsellors, sailors and soldiers, labourers and artisans, mothers with babes at their breasts and countless little children, and softly in the Eastern starlight they join with us in singing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill towards men." Then suddenly we realize that here is no past with a date as of something over. It is significant that we do not know the exact year or day on which the Lord was born. It matters not, for everywhere round the world, at the almost innumerable Christian altars that girdle it, the same Holy Child Jesus is being born in the Mystery of the Holy Sacrament, with the same Flesh and Blood in which angels and shepherds worshipped Him. Bethlehem is here.

Or let us suppose ourselves in the Upper-room in a street in the Jerusalem of long ago. The great moment has come when Our Lord, foreseeing so clearly His Passion and Death on the morrow, will rehearse His Sacrifice and appoint a way in which that Sacrifice and His Presence will be perpetuated. In a holy awe the Apostles hear for the very first time in

history the greatest creative words that ever were spoken, greater than "Let there be light, and there was light." They see Jesus take the unleavened cake, look up and bless, and hear His Words, so marvellous, "This is My Body." What does He mean? They knew better many years after, though those years made no change: He was still there in the midst, His Sacrifice accomplished, yet ever pleading that Sacrifice. And, though nearly twenty centuries are gone, the lapse of time has made no difference, save, perhaps, to deepen our sense of awe and mystery and thanksgiving. He still is here: the Words are still His Words: the power to effect His Presence as Crucified is still His Power. The Upper-room is here.

Or let us suppose ourselves going out from the room after Supper, out over Kidron to the Garden-place, Gethsemane. Once again we see Him stand beneath the silvery leaved olives, and kneel yonder in the moonlight in a calm of nature that emphasizes by contrast His Divine unrest. He is prostrate on the ground, on His shoulders an intolerable load. He is upright on His knees. A short time since He has held in His Hands the first Christian chalice. Now He beholds another, a mystic Cup, yet so palpable. He sees in it the sins of the world. He must drink. As we eat and drink and identify food with our

bodies, He must drink and identify in some terrible mystery our sins with His soul's experience. We hear again the anguished cry, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," and the great triumph of "Nevertheless Thy will be done," and almost in imagination see the red rain from His sacred Brow, see His Hands grasp at the Chalice, see His eager Lips drain it to the last drop, for He is giving His soul's peace for all. Well, Gethsemane, too, is here. Our living Memory shows us Our Lord, the true Celebrant every time, and, ere He consecrates the chalice of wine to be His Blood, He quaffs to the last drop the Cup of our iniquities: He makes new the Memory of our sins ere He makes new for us the Memory of His life-giving Sacrifice: as a present draught He takes our sins ere He gives us to drink of His Precious Blood.

Or suppose yourself following through the streets of Jerusalem, down the rough way through yonder poor district of the city, up the steep slope, amidst ribald cries and harsh curses and cruel blows. Out through the gate, past the wailing daughters of Jerusalem, along by the wall to the little green hill of Calvary. The Cross lies there. Rudely He is stripped and thrown on that cruel bed of death. The nails are driven home, and the Red Blood of Hope and Deliverance and Mercy flows freely,

and His Lips murmur in a great constancy of pity, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Between earth and heaven He hangs, but never wearies in His offering of love. Even to think of it brings a choking in our throats, a constriction to our hearts. Well, it is here: Calvary is here, not as the memory of a past, but a living Memory. Here is Jesus Crucified. Through the world the harsh cries of His enemies still assail His sacred Ears. Still His wounds rankle with the nails of sins that bind His activities, cords of coldness that still impede the free course of His Feet of Beauty on their way that He may proclaim the Good News to all nations. Still His prayer goes up, "Father, forgive them." Still His red Blood gushes forth, and is caught in the mysterious chalice to be the world's redemption. Calvary is not dead: it lives and is pleaded in a vital Memory in the Holy Sacrifice of the altar.

5.

In Remembrance. Do not our hearts thrill afresh as we realize it all? Are we not surprised at our own coldness many a time in celebrating the Mysteries, and more still at our refraining from celebrating them; for each Christian is as responsible as the priest for "Doing This" for Christ's Memorial?

Sunday by Sunday who would be absent that caught half the meaning of the Service? On week-days how can the whole body of the faithful suffer themselves to be represented by such a very few as actually do frequent the altar? A little bit of real self-denial would speedily multiply our attendance on week-days ten-fold. Who could miss the opportunity that realized the Remembrance?

We look back, back on those sins which, even forgiven, are such a memory, and realize that here is presented ever afresh the sufficient Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

We look back, back on that longing to be very near to God: "O that I knew where I might find Him," and behold He is here in the nearness and humility of a Sacrament, the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world, opening up the way by which sinners can draw near (*prope*) to the Father.

We look back, back on all the blessings we have received at the hands of God, for each altar catches up from the preceding altars its growing store of living memories, and we are aware that all are here in our Remembrance of Thanksgiving.

Yes, in this Remembrance time and eternity are merged, and as creatures of eternity we, with our loving, living memories, must constantly find our happiest, best moments by the

altar where His Priesthood makes for us the Offering of Himself that abides for ever, the one constancy in the changing flux of things, things that pass dreamlike by the great Reality, Jesus Crucified for me.

III

LOOKING UPWARD

"*Spiritual Sacrifices*" (St Peter).

1.

We have seen that in the Holy Eucharist the Past of Redeeming Love is made to live, and is realized as an eternal Present. Obviously the devout celebration of the Sacred Mysteries must involve every time a distinct act of recollection. Deliberately in preparing to go to the altar we stir up our memories and picture some at least of the scenes of the great World Drama. For a devout and frequent worshipper in the Service of the altar there is no danger of Calvary being forgotten. Moreover, when the world outside sees us so insistent on the duty of attendance at Mass, and notes how the Catholic Church has ever set the altar in the very centre of her buildings and the Lord's Service in the forefront of her devotions, it must be impressed by such a remembrance: it cannot wholly escape the healing shadow of the Cross. Yet we know that this is not the first or chief purpose of making our Memorial.

Look away for the moment from the Christian Church to other known religions. They centre in sacrifices, and the sacrifices are directed upward, Godward. You see high hills chosen as the sites of out-of-doors altars, and in temples the altar is normally approached by steps, calling man's thoughts upwards. The offerings are made to powers above. The sophisticated know that the terms "upward" and "above" are purely symbolical, but the symbolism is so universal and so helpful that we accept it in a true simplicity.

The Jewish Sacrifices were in line with the heathen in this upward direction. Go back to the two festivals before mentioned of Purim and the Passover. You can trace in Purim the notes of thanksgiving for a great deliverance, of challenge, as the people are put upon their mettle to prove themselves worthy of such a marvellous providence; but the dominant religious reference is upwards, Godwards, as men praise and adore God by their ritual celebrations, recognizing His character as exemplified by such a rescue. The Passover is an acted drama of God's goodness in bringing the people out of Egypt. They dress themselves in pilgrim attire as their fathers did preparatory to setting forth. They gird themselves and take their staffs in their hands as though to help them over the rough places and to ward off the attacks of jackals or other

wild beasts. They hastily roast their lambs and bake their unleavened cakes and prepare their bitter herbs; and, standing, partake in haste of their sacramental meal. It is no mere quaint survival of an old ceremonial now meaningless. It is all acted before God, as it were, to put Him in mind that once He wrought such a mighty deliverance, all of His free love and choice. "That," they would say, "is the kind of God we know you to be, and we adore You as such." The other purposes were all subordinate to this highest, religious significance. So it was that the whole burnt-offerings, in which the sacrifices were entirely consumed to ascend in smoke, and the clouds that rose from the altars of incense, went upwards as showing the chief reference of all the holiest acts of worship.

2.

It was amongst people of such traditions, it was in an atmosphere charged with the sentiments of sacrifice at the holy Passover-tide, that Our Lord instituted the Holy Communion. Most people, I think, recognize in the very words employed by Jesus a sacrificial sense. In any case the intention of the whole Institution seems to me to be clear. Here is something to be done looking Godward, making a Memorial before Him, and it is so

that Holy Church has interpreted the Saviour's intention. There is the very term "altar." There is the undoubted recognition of a sacrificing priesthood from very early times. There is St. Paul's comparison of the Holy Communion with the heathen sacrifices as being so much superior to them. There is the language of devotion that early gathered round the altar, so largely derived from the Jewish sacrificial psalms. Most people to-day need no arguing about the fact of the Holy Eucharist being truly a "Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." But it has to be connected with "In Remembrance." There has never been any suggestion of disparaging or detracting from the One Sacrifice of Calvary, perfect and sufficient. Here is not provision made for an infinite succession of supplementary sacrifices. It is precisely, as we saw already, the One Perfect Sacrifice which is made to live before God when we offer His Son before Him as crucified, present on the altar in virtue of the Consecration under the forms of Bread and Wine. The drama of our celebration has this as its chief end. The taking, the blessing, the breaking, are all done before God the Father to put Him in mind of His wonderful love. "In this," we may be supposed to imply, "In this we show forth the death of Thy only-begotten Son on Calvary, in the very way He taught us, to declare thus that we

know Thee to be the God of such infinite love and goodness and mercy that Thou gavest Him to die for us the death of shame, and we 'do this' to adore Thee for what Thou art and to praise Thy unbounded love." First and highest comes our adoration and then our thanksgiving, before ever a thought arises of blessings to be received. That is obviously the first meaning of sacrifice, and the highest, and we cannot rest short of the very highest in the case of the Christian Sacrifice.

3.

This "looking upward" is much needed to-day, especially perhaps to save us from two common errors. There are not a few who regard the Holy Communion as a means of obtaining blessings for themselves, just as they regard the chief end of prayer to be the asking of God for something for themselves or others. They thus, perhaps involuntarily, suggest to the world such an idea of the Church that many believe it to exist chiefly as a "Society for getting things done for you," with, alas, the further implication sometimes of "getting something for nothing." Our "looking upward" in Sacrifice sounds at once and imperatively the note that the Church is a Sacrificing Society which exists to give rather than to get, and which concentrates on

life as an opportunity Godwards. This note has made its appeal to many who would be repelled by any suggestion of the Church as a kind of "Mutual Improvement Association" which would invite to membership with the words, "Come, and we shall do you good," but who are attracted by the S.O.S., "Come and help us to worship God as He deserves to be worshipped by Sacrifice—Sacrifice at the altar and sacrifice in daily life. Without your aid there is something lacking."

The other error is that many are content with a merely ethical religion, seeking no sanction beyond the needs of humanity. This religion is adjusted simply to mere human capacities. It has no real inspiration, at least no lasting inspiration, and no continuing driving power. Auguste Comte tried it on a large scale, enlisted some of the noblest of mankind in his effort, set his statue of human mother and human child amongst his followers, wrote beautifully and movingly of the potentialities of humanity, of the divine nature of pity, and much more—and failed. "Looking upward" in our Sacrifice reminds us that our first adjustment must be Godwards. Was it not so that Our Lord Himself taught when He gave us the *first* commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and when He taught us to pray first, "Hallowed be Thy Name," and only at an

interval afterwards, "Give us this day our daily bread"?

4.

We look upward at the altar, then, because the Presence of Our Saviour in His very own Body and Blood comes from above. We do not believe in a creative faith, but in a percipient faith. Faith must not be regarded, as some very unguarded language might suggest, as a kind of God Almighty. It is from God. It enables us to receive and believe what God gives and reveals. So we ought definitely to look at every Celebration for the unseen coming of our Great High-priest. His humiliation is so perfect that He still awaits our call whenever made that He should come down to be our Priest and Victim. That is really a startling fact too little regarded. Suppose that on the notice-board of any church there appeared some words like these which could command credence: "Next Sunday at such an hour the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will celebrate here the Holy Eucharist." How people would flock to church to see and hear, and what reverence and devotion would prevail! Many would willingly give years of their lives for such an experience. Has not Our Lord said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"? Every

time this happens. Every time the dear Lord Himself does celebrate, consecrate, offer, plead, and feed us. Every time by the power of the Holy Spirit He changes the Bread and Wine so that they become His Body and Blood. We do not look up in vain. We do not keep up a memorial of an absent Christ. The outward forms of Bread and Wine are signs, not of a Christ not there, but of a Christ truly present on our altars.

5.

Again we look upward at the altar to the God Who sometimes seems so far away, always so far above us in holiness and love. We know how well He has deserved of us, to use a poor, imperfect expression. We have been dwelling on all His love in our thoughts. We are drawn by a great longing to give Him something absolutely worthy of Him. Worship is just that, to offer to God something worthy—"Worth-ship." Yet how can we? It would need to be an offering without any spot or blemish, of infinite merit, given with purest intention. We need to make ourselves as little children. A wise father, as Christmas time comes round, deals out to his children little sums of money for buying presents. When his own is found by his plate on the breakfast table "with much love and all

good wishes," he does not reflect, "I had to pay for it": he accepts it with warm expression of thanks, and the children's hearts glow with his appreciation. God the Father provided the Sacrifice to be offered, and pleaded by His whole Church. It cost the terrible price of the Saviour's Cross and Passion. Jesus came into the world to redeem us, but the first great redemptive act was that in our humanity He should offer to the Father an atoning Sacrifice of perfect love and obedience. At the altar He allows us to join in the presenting of that Sacrifice; for from above there comes the very Body born once in humiliation of a holy Maiden, born now in greater lowliness in a Sacrament; offered once in the heroism, yet degradation of the death of a slave, now coming to be our Sacrifice commemorated in a solemn consecration. We look up and we see what took place long ago, when, as the Epistle to the Hebrews so vividly declares, Our Lord having suffered outside the city walls, rose and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high to present the offering of His Blood in the very holy of holies. He fulfils the solemn ceremonial of the Jewish High-priest who entered year by year alone to sprinkle the mercy-seat with sacrificial blood. Our High-priest ever liveth in His own Crucified, Risen, and Ascended Humanity, making a perpetual offering of adoration as Our Head,

and continually interceding for us. We look up and see that, and more, for, as an ancient prayer reminds us, when from above Christ Our Sacrifice has come to be present with us, behold in a great mystery the Sacrifice is carried up as by angelic hands, is received by Our Mighty Intercessor, and is presented before the Eternal Father.

6.

We still look upwards, for in that moment we are conscious of a great acceptance. It is in the truest sense a propitious moment, for we are very near (*prope*) to God, and He to us. So with our great Oblation we dare now to bring the lesser offerings of ourselves, all that we have and are, our aspirations and hopes, our alms, our prayers, our vows. We know that there is One waiting for them Who has Hands bearing still the marks of His great love, Who will gladly receive them, lovingly perfect them, and make them a very living part of His own Oblation.

We look up still and, knowing the wealth of Divine Tenderness wrapping us round about, we confidently bring our needs, our dear ones for safe keeping, our sick for help and healing, our weak friends that they may be made strong, our rulers for wisdom, our priests for consecration, our wanderers for

restoration, our heathen brethren for enlightenment, our dead that they may have pardon and perfecting. In a great intimacy we name the names of many and make our little promises of service. By the eyes of faith we see right into the Heart of God, and a great Peace is ours. It is a blessed moment of looking up.

7.

We look upwards, too, that ours may be a true share in the wider fellowship of the world unseen, but very real, where saints and angels dwell. We see them intent also in a holy worship, and in their midst, just as amongst ourselves, "a Lamb as it had been slain." In some glorious fashion they also have their Eucharist, their Divine Priest and Victim. Sometimes as we look up and listen we can almost catch the sound of their heavenly songs as softly they chant around the throne, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts . . . Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory and honour. . . . Glory be to Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb." We see the holy Mother of God in her perfect joy, gathering gladness as each Sacrifice on earth is made and as our prayers ascend, proofs of the fruits of her Son's Passion. We see the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists, Martyrs

and Confessors, Matrons and Virgins, all glad, all joining in our adoration, all praying with and for us, and we are filled with a great hope, for once, we know, they struggled down here, once many of them knew what it was to fall into grave sin, to carry many a secret sorrow, to meet with many a bitter disappointment, to be tried by many a perplexing doubt. But now, triumphant, they declare to us that all the sorrow and pain were well worth while, that the tears of deep contrition were well shed, and the unsparing efforts of service well spent. "Here, too, is your place," they say; "we are not perfectly happy till you come and join us. Patience and courage! The day of your welcome draws nigh. Hold fast, that none snatch from you your crown."

8.

The holy angels, too, have their message. They stand by to be our aid. They catch their inspiration and wisdom round the throne of God; and as we look up and see them, at the very moment of our Sacrifice, prostrate before the heavenly throne, we know that in a moment their swift way will bring them to our side, mighty unseen helpers day and night.

We do well to look up. Jesus Himself looked up as He lay on the bed of the Cross, being nailed to it, and so could pray, "Father,

forgive them." St. Stephen, at his stoning, looked up and saw Jesus standing, as though stepping forward to receive him, and so could pray, "Lay not this sin to their charge." We look up at the altar and catch this key-note of our holy religion, the longing to give, the longing to be sacrificed. The great fact of our salvation, its Givenness, comes home to us as from above the Victim descends. The great response of the ransomed, their Givingness, is elicited from us as we present to the Father above the all-prevailing Sacrifice, and with it our poor best of praise, thanksgiving, and service. It cost Him Calvary to come down and be our Sacrifice. Shall we not rejoice if it costs us a little to look upward Sunday by Sunday, and day by day, to plead that perfect offering?

IV

LOOKING INWARD

"*Let a man examine himself. . . . Discerning the Lord's Body*" (St. Paul).

We have seen that in the Holy Eucharist the great Acts of Redemptive Love live on for ever; that the Sacrifice of Calvary is commemorated at the altar in honour of God, being offered to adore Him, to give Him thanks, and to plead with Him for the application of Christ's merits to the living and the faithful departed for their sanctification. The faithful will call to mind that from the beginning this has been regarded as the Service at once of deepest obligation and highest privilege for all Catholics every Lord's Day and every great Holy Day. No one who apprehends its worth, its history, and its purpose could ever substitute for this any other service however touching or edifying. The Holy Mass draws the hearts of Catholics everywhere and at all times up to the very Throne of God, as they present before Him the all-sufficient Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It costs us something to offer truly, for we do not present

the Sacrifice as our substitute in any such sense as that we may escape our personal obligations. Always with the Divine Victim we are bound to present ourselves, our souls and bodies, a whole burnt-offering, dedicated, at whatever cost it may involve for us, entirely to live for God's glory.

2.

The culminating point of our Sacrifice is when the moment of Communion arrives. It was so in the ancient symbolic sacrifices of the Old Testament, when the worshippers partook of their share of the victims as a symbol of the communion which they desired with God.

The three great acts of the Christian Sacrifice are the formal offering of the earthly material to be used, the Bread and Wine ; the Consecration, wherein by the power of God these are changed and become the Body and Blood of Christ ; and, lastly, our feeding upon the Sacrifice. It is doubtful if all communicants quite realize the intimacy of such a feeding. It is well for us, then, to consider the meaning of Our Lord's having chosen such a Memorial of His Passion, and having made eating and drinking the outward manner of an inward appropriation of Him. There are, of course, the natural reflexions that a banquet all the world over is a recognized way of observing a great commemoration, opening men's hearts

and calling them away from their more narrow and personal interests, and that salvation was not intended by Our Lord to be regarded as a purely individual experience: we were meant to be saved in a Body, and that His Mystical Body, the Church. It seems worth while to emphasize this eating and drinking together as a family, because one so often finds at an early celebration of Holy Communion that people take their favourite places as individuals or little groups of two or three all over the church; they occupy themselves with their private devotions; they go up in what one may describe a very individual manner to receive and return to their place apart. In other words, quite unconsciously, they often do their best practically to spoil the corporateness of their communion. If only they would place themselves near together, it would help matters, as many have felt who, as members of Guilds or Confraternities, have thus from time to time arranged themselves. It is so clearly desired by the whole idea of the Liturgy and by its parts. To take only one instance. There is what is called the "General Confession" of sins—"We acknowledge": that is a corporate utterance. It does not dispense with private confession beforehand, whether made alone or, when conscience and the sense of serious sin lead a man, made to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance. No. Surely, it

is better to regard it as gathering up in a general way the whole results of private self-examination and confession, and the general Absolution as embracing in one expression of Divine pardon the particular absolutions and forgivenesses. Note the point: a man takes his place before the altar to communicate, not as an individual, but as one of a great Society, called to be an unblemished Society. The presence of one unworthy, unprepared member of it will mar the spiritual beauty of the whole, will be "a spot" in the Feast of Charity; so that, if only from the point of view of our fellow-communicants, we are driven to *looking inward* to consider very carefully whether our state is such as to justify our communion, and, if not, what must be done to set things right. When we think of some we know, such quiet, devout, unpretentious saints of God, as draw near in Holy Communion Sunday by Sunday, and day by day, how humble many of us must feel! How humble a priest often feels as he delivers the Precious Body and Blood to many whom he knows to be far more advanced in holiness and living far nearer to God than himself!

3.

But there is a further and still more significant idea in the "eating and drinking." The "washing with water" in Baptism brings out

the idea of the cleansing of our souls through the virtue of the Precious Blood of Christ shed for us. Here, in Holy Communion, is the very Sacred Body, here is the very Precious Blood, offered for us on Calvary, now offered to us in a Sacrament. "We are verily and indeed to take and receive the Body and Blood." We are to "feed on Christ." We are to "eat His Flesh and drink His Blood." We are to "dwell in Him and He in us." The language of Holy Scripture and of the Liturgies could not be more emphatic, and the testimony of the ancient Fathers of the Church as to the actual reception of Christ's Body and Blood is unanimous. Now of all things with which I am brought in contact one comes nearest, becomes most physically intimate. The chair I sit on is near me. The clothes I wear are very intimate. But nearest comes my food, which is assimilated by me and becomes my body and blood. Our Lord in Holy Communion comes to us in such close fashion. There is a physical union, but it is the means of something still more intimate, our union with Our Lord in Divine charity. He enters into us and assimilates us to Himself. The very thought of it is too big for comprehension, but then it is the very thought of Divine Love which ever surpasses human comprehension. Yet we can grasp some of the meaning of such an honour done us by the God of Glory, the

Eternal Son of the Father, coming into the closest union with our poor humanity, coming to be in us an antidote to the bodily corruption that flows from sin, to allay in us the fires of evil desire, to build up in us a body fit for everlasting life. So it is that in very deed and truth He personally and in His sacramental Body enters into me, and makes me "a very member incorporate in His mystical Body."

At once there leap to my mind the questions: "But who is worthy of such an honour? How dare I approach to receive such sacred gifts?" In other words, we are driven again, and more urgently than before, to looking inward.

4.

Let us think of earthly comradeship. There is a very intellectual man I know with whom I desire to form an intimate friendship. Unless I am a conceited and empty-headed fool, I say, "If I am going to associate with him I must make myself as familiar as possible with his special learning so as to be able to converse intelligently about it and take a real interest in it." Or there is another who is engaged in some very remarkable project for the uplift of mankind—physically, mentally, morally. His whole heart is in it. He thinks of it early and late, dreams of it, puts his wealth into it. I long for his close friendship. At once I

must set myself to share his heart's desire, must allow myself to be kindled by his enthusiasm, must emulate his devotion, must give him active assistance in carrying out his plans. Or I know a man of notably holy character, one living always very near to God. If I am really to be a friend of his, I must try myself to aim at holiness, to care, above all, for "things that are pure and holy and of good report."

Well, now, in Holy Communion there is something more vitally intimate than even good comradeship. There is the reality of Our Lord's extending His Incarnation, as it were, by using our very bodies and souls in which to dwell, through which to operate. Think of His knowledge, and especially of His knowledge of the Father. If I am to know the real joy of communion I must be striving every day to learn more of the Father, His goodness and love, His holiness and truth. I look inward and see how little I know, and how little time and thought I give in prayer, meditation, study of the Holy Scriptures, study of Mission work, to increase my knowledge.

Think of His high purpose for the human race. No great doctor or philanthropist or explorer ever had such a high purpose as He, for soul and body, for time and eternity. None was ever met with such difficulties as

sin-possessed man presented. Yet He was not daunted. In His Incarnate life He threw Himself wholly, Body and Soul, into the conflict, and still presents Himself in unending, unfathomable love and hope, for man's entire Redemption. He has a Divine enthusiasm for humanity and its perfecting. I look inward, and what a blank I find! How ready I am to acquiesce in man's degradation, to call the vision of his perfection a mere dream! And yet, if I am to be a real intimate of Christ, I should be fired with that burning desire of His Sacred Heart.

Think of His holiness. Other holy ones there have been, but the very best of them seems so limited in comparison. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?", He could ask, and yet even that is from one point of view a mere negative idea. There is the positive presence of every noble virtue, of purity, love, generosity, truth, steadfastness, loyalty to Divine truth, simplicity, at the highest, beyond the furthest reach of our spiritual imagination. I look inward, and how black it all seems; yet something I must catch of the shining of His Soul in mine if we are to be true intimates.

5.

Now, I am aware that many people faced with the thought of this intimacy which Our Lord

would establish in Holy Communion would be inclined at once to say, "Well, honestly, I am not fit for all that, and I am not going to be a hypocrite, so you must excuse me from coming to receive the Sacrament?" Is that a right attitude of mind and soul? Is it really praiseworthy as being so very humble, honest, and straightforward? Unfortunately the man who makes such a statement often seems to expect it to be appraised like this. Yet analyse it and you are bound usually, at least, to come to this conclusion: such an attitude is at bottom cowardly, ungrateful, mentally, morally, and spiritually lazy. Why? Because God has revealed to us the glorious possibilities of Holy Communion. Once we have recognized these, we should never be content till our response is forthcoming to the Divine challenge; for our invitation to receive is no less than that, a challenge. Moreover, to refuse the honour done us in the invitation is surely a very grave insult to Divine charity that at such cost provided for us such a Banquet. And what of the refusal? What does it imply? That a man means to go on without the grace he might have in Holy Communion in face of the Saviour's very explicit warning: "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." In a word, God Almighty, Who demands so much, has by His Son and

in His Church provided the means of getting ready, not the least being the increasing grace that is ours in each successive communion.

6.

There is another point of view. Our Blessed Lord also longs for each communion, longs to be taken in, our hearts to be made over to Him in that great intimacy. It is always like that in God's dealings with us. He is always before us, ahead of us. The prodigal coming home to his father met him, not in the house, but found the father had come out a long way to meet him: had he realized all, he would have known that it was the father's love and longing which drew him back from his sinful ways. So Our Lord is ahead of us at the altar rails when we go up to receive. Our Lord looks down with longing welcome as we walk up. It is true. Shall we, then, for want of some real trouble, rob Him of His looked-for joy? He longs also to live in us, to work by us to-day, to-morrow, and the next day, and will enable us in the grace of a true and good communion.

7.

So we come back to the old lesson of the need of most careful and searching preparation

for each communion. I point out a special meaning one might see in the ancient custom that we should receive Holy Communion fasting, before any other food enters our bodies. There is a double suggestion in it, emptiness and hunger. We are called by looking inward to discover the things that must be put out, all of self. But that is not enough: there must be a great hunger for Christ, a real conviction that, without His coming to us, life is a vain thing, and a longing desire for close union and friendship with Him, our dear Saviour and Lord. We cannot command our feelings in the matter; but we can make sure of the strong, rational, spiritual desire.

Ordinarily, I suppose, many Christians in preparation will use the Ten Commandments as interpreted in a Christian sense; they will look into the mirror of Our Lord's life by the Light of the Holy Spirit to catch a glimpse of themselves as they really are. Suppose we place ourselves before a Crucifix, perhaps in church before the Blessed Sacrament, where Our Lord dwells under the Outward Species. Think of all our communion is to mean in the way of intimacy. Now let us make an effort to anticipate it in a certain fashion. Let the imagination be given free play, and behold Our Lord comes down from the Cross, or forth from the Tabernacle, right down to

where we kneel. Bring Him into our hearts. What a revelation! A very splendidly attired person, shimmering in silks like a spring morning, pure and bright and fresh, enters a shabby dwelling. Everything looked all right a moment before. Now all is manifestly shabby and mean. A poor illustration, but it serves. Into the mean abode of our hearts, to the meanness of which we have grown so accustomed that we think there is nothing much amiss, there comes, shining (though it be but in imagination that we bring Him in), the very Perfect Knight of all chivalry and tender love and pity and high daring, with His emblems of a Broken Heart and a Blood-red Cross. At once we begin to discern the shabbiness, the meanness, the poor furnishings, the great empty places—the ancient prejudices, the little malice and spite, the thwarted ambition, the misplaced affection, the duty undone, the silly vanity, the racial pride, the "conscious superiority," the arrogance, the contempt, the unforgivingness and unforgettingness—mean and shabby and worse it is, and almost we cry out, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Go back to the poor illustration. She shimmered who entered in her splendid attire the shabby dwelling, but she shimmered inwardly also with a very great sympathy and understanding, and in it she caught up the shabbiness and made it shine. So, as we

would bid Our Lord depart and never enter more, we catch the sparkle in His eye of real longing to abide, of sympathy and comprehension, though He abates nothing of His demands for holiness and purity and love, and we are moved to long, "O, if only He might abide with me, my beloved Guest!" "Why not?" He answers our unspoken longing, "Why not, if only you think it worth while?" "Worth what?" we cry. "Worth getting rid of all this rubbish and filth," He says; and now His eye really flashes in just wrath, "and worth filling every room with love and pity and forgiveness just like what you may have of Me." "Repent, confess, thou shalt be loosed from all."

8.

We need never in this life look for much joy or blessing in our communions if we come unprepared or half-prepared, with a mere casual "look inward." Sensible joy may not come, anyhow, but something better may be ours if we take pains. We can have the satisfaction of preparing in our hearts a fit lodging for Our Lord so that we shall not spoil His joy in finding a soul cleansed by penitence, often shriven, full of tender love and firm purpose, always waiting and longing for His Presence.

Yes, we shall look inward and say, "Is this

that I see here what my Lord deserves at His coming? What must be banished, what ought to be amended, what want must be supplied?" Thus will our looking inward be saved from every taint of morbidness or flavour of mere soul-saving, and our whole beings will gain their right adjustment to God and our neighbour as we set ourselves to "go even unto His holy altar."

V

LOOKING FORWARD

"*Till He Come*" (St. Paul).

The holy altar affords us the one changeless thing in a world of change. Nations rise and fall. Generations of saints and sinners live and pass away. Customs change from age to age. New inventions alter all the conditions of our material life. Fresh races appear on the stage of history. Devastating wars sweep over the face of continents. Earthquakes change the nature of vast stretches of mountain and plain. Old diseases are stamped out and new diseases fall like a scourge on our humanity. Fashions come and go in literature, art, music. The newest scientific theories in a few years are antiquated. Constant amid all the flux stands the altar, with always the same priesthood to minister there, though the individual priests change; always the same Victim there, though the stream of worshippers is ever changing; always the same adoration of the Eternal God rising prevailingly, though different voices utter the "Holy, Holy, Holy," the "Hosanna," the "Alleluia."

In a sense it is timeless, out of space, supra-national. Age cannot dim its splendour, for there is present in ever fresh virtue the Blood of the Lamb of God. The Sacred Presence transcends space, so no altar stands in a distant place. No nation has a special lien upon the Sacrifice, for it belongs to the Saviour of humanity. It is truly the Catholic Oblation, for in it are all time, all space, and all nations, and, if we understand it aright, all truth necessary to salvation.

There we look backward. The Church's hope is rooted in the essential goodness of God as experienced in a past that yet was from eternity and reaches to eternity, centring specially in the miracle of Bethlehem and the Atoning Offering on Calvary, and the rending of the Tomb and the opening of the skies for the Ascending Christ.

There we look upward, that human life may find its true adjustment, its proper orientation. Humanity is already in its right place, where Jesus, our Head, is at the right hand of the Father in an activity that radiates salvation to the ends of the world, in Whose present occupation the Holy Sacrifice so wonderfully associates us.

There we look inward, for the Sacrament of Love makes most searching demands upon us. There is nothing so exacting in its claims as Love, no one, in the high sense, so jealous as

God. With Him it must be "all or nothing"; and the "all" must be stainless, pure, love-filled. For the chief point of our communion is not that our love may find its satisfaction, nor that our souls may be nourished unto everlasting life. Communion during the celebration is the norm because we associate ourselves by it with Our Lord's offering of Himself. He is the Pure Oblation, the Spotless Victim; but He offers as Head of the Family, and we are presenting ourselves in and with Him; we are asking Him to lift us up before the Father when we make our communions, whether spiritually or sacramentally, but especially when we receive under the Veils of Bread and Wine the Precious Body and Blood. That truth is brought out very forcibly in the Church's teaching before referred to, that the Sacrifice in the Holy Eucharist includes the three parts—the Offertory or solemn presentation of the Bread and Wine, the Consecration or changing of the elements into the Body and Blood of Christ, and the Communion or actual partaking of the Sacrament.

So we must on no account mar the Sacrifice by an unworthy communion, nor dare we withhold ourselves from sharing to the full in the Oblation. That is why we are called to turn our gaze so searchingly inward and urged to use every means to secure the cleansing

of our souls by contrition, confession, and absolution.

We picture a whole world at worship. We see in imagination the altars that gird the globe. Up and down the homeland, in obscure but happy parish churches in lone hamlets and far country-sides, in Highland glens and isles around our coasts; over the seas amid dusky races, in glades amid tropical forests, in swarming native towns and villages; in the Colonies, in the Bush and on the rolling prairies, and in the mushroom township of a few months' growth; in splendid centres of ancient civilizations, within walls that gather the memories of twenty generations of Christian worshippers; aboard ship, where in a whirl of waters the altar swings rhythmically, yet fails not of its holy purpose; on the field of battle, where death hurtles momentarily round the Memorial of the Death of the Captain of our salvation; in vast cathedrals, in tiny chapels, amidst huge, eager crowds, or where the two or three faithful are gathered together; there is uplifted this Universal Offering, the greatest Thing on earth with, as its counterpart, the greatest Thing in Heaven, and we realize with a thrill that it sums up our human story, for it not only looks backward and upward and inward, but it looks forward too, and we are creatures pre-eminently of To-morrow. We are a progressive race. Now we are in a

merely temporary stage. We drop nothing precious by the way. At the altar we distil life's best experiences. But we look forward. "The best is yet to be," and we gauge its excellence by the goodness of what has been and of what is. In an old book, the *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, dating from, perhaps, early in the second century, we read that at the end of the Eucharist it was the custom to say, "Maran atha. Amen"—"The Lord is at hand, is coming. Amen." That shows an attitude of heart and mind which apparently Our Lord intended to be continuous. There is to be no impatience. There is to be no peevish rebellion because of long delay. There is to be no lack of appreciation of the glorious Presence of Our King amongst us. But always we are to look on to our perfecting, to the perfecting of all things.

Jesus in instituting the Blessed Sacrament evidently made it a temporary arrangement. We have the reliable evidence of St. Paul that we were to Do THIS until the Lord should come again, looking for the glorious time when no longer under sacramental veils, but in open vision, the Lord will show Himself. This seems implied also in the saying of Our Lord so abundantly recorded, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

2.

So at the altar we look forward. But to what? Well, supremely perhaps, to the Lord's return to "make up His jewels." As to how and when He will "come again" we know not. It will surely be a glad day for Him, for He will see all His Heart's desire: sin overcome in all men; pain no more harrowing and ravaging our humanity; love elicited from all and burning with a bright, unselfish flame; all energy released for positive service; all partial ideals caught up in the glory of the perfect ideal, Jesus as He is. When on earth Our Blessed Lord spoke of the baptism with which He must be baptized, and "how I am straitened till it be accomplished." Death was to rend certain bonds and fetters; an eternal set of loyalties and attachments was to be acquired. It was a joyful looking forward. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame." And He drew His brethren into the splendid anticipation. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Think then! There is this double looking forward. At every Celebration we look up with eager gaze; we try by faith to penetrate the Veils of Mystery; we launch our longing hearts on the forward voyage and already

sometimes hear in spirit Our Lord's own words of welcome, " Come, ye blessed of My Father : Come, ye that travail and are heavy laden : Come, for here at last in My Presence is rest for your souls." " O," we cry, " that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat," and Love and Desire press hard on the hindering clouds. But there is a correspondence. Beyond the Veil Another looks forward still more eagerly. Right from the altar He looks down and with eager Human Heart expects the day of mutual joy in the unveiled fellowship.

3.

There is another experience which is commonly described as the Beatific Vision, which saints represent as the greatest privilege of redeemed humanity and open only to those who are perfectly pure in heart. It really is indescribable, is bound to be so because of its nature. It is, indeed, beyond the widest range of our spiritual imagination. Somehow to gaze on the perfection of the Godhead ! Somehow to realize the eternal goodness and love of the Holy Trinity, dependent on none other for complete satisfaction, complete activity, perfect giving and receiving, the source and sum of all beauty and all holiness ! Occasionally in our lives we have caught a glimpse of a beauty

that overpowered us in the glory of a sunset sky over a sea of lambent fire or of a sunrise over the Highland hills of the West Coast of our island. Someone seemed trying to express Himself and we could only feebly apprehend His meaning. Or we came upon some deed or life of heroic faith and self-sacrifice, flashing on us suddenly in an unexpected quarter and filling us with such a sense of goodness as almost choked us with an overpowering emotion. Or better still, sometimes, especially in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and contemplating the depth and length and breadth and height of Our dear Lord's Oblation of Himself, we have in a moment, and perhaps just for a moment, had one look at the unfathomable love of the Saviour, lifting us out of ourselves in a kind of ecstasy. Well, at the best each and all of these we believe to be but fringes of the radiance of the unveiled Beauty of God in Himself, a Beauty so generous that it must now and again scintillate for a moment in life's experience. To see that Beauty, to see It whole, to see It always—is not that something worth an eternity of longing and striving and purging that we may attain to it? To such a longing every Celebration of the Mysteries, the Veiled Beauty of God, calls us.

4.

But round the altar there are other presences unseen. In the very midst of the Mass we challenge them to join us in our worship, for it is only as it were in company of angels and archangels and all the host of heaven that we dare to raise our song of the Thrice-Holy. Not always will they be so veiled. We look forward to a day when we shall see and know them and be seen and known of them. We think of the holy Mother of God. We may well believe that she perceives with a holy joy the multitude of worshippers round the earthly altars. She, true Mother in her very being, Jesus' Mother for always, must yearn and long and pray for the accomplishment of all the work of His Passion and Death. Those who pray well must love well, and as she prays constantly for us we can understand how her love flows forth in a continual stream towards us and towards the Father through her Son for us. We are no strangers to her who loves us so well. And so we picture sometimes the day of our meeting face to face, of gazing on the dear Mother "Whom Jesus loves so well," of daring to offer her our own heart's love. Because we love Jesus supremely, our love must embrace the objects of His love, and in the Holy Communion we find them all at hand. So, in the longing of faith and not

of mere imagination, we look forward to beholding and conversing with St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul, our patrons, the myriad unknown ones who stand high in the ranks of the heavenly beings, for eternity is long and everlasting life is of big scope. There, too, we shall, we believe, behold in our spirit's vision the holy angels and archangels, Michael and Gabriel and our holy Guardian angels, and all those other spiritual beings who live only to serve and love—all friends of our struggling humanity.

Near us, too, we know, at this focus on earth of all that is best here and of the enduring hereafter, are our own dear departed ones who have heard and followed Christ. Very near to us are they in the Body of Christ. Sometimes we can by a kind of special sense discern their presence. We do not foolishly ask to clasp their hands here again, or to hear some utterance of mere time through other lips, or to continue the fellowship of the world order only: that has been. There is already at the altar the higher fellowship, that is more spiritual, that is better adjusted to eternity. Yet it is not enough. We ask for more, are promised more; but not yet, not immediately can it be ours. We look forward to the day when we and they shall be perfected, and when in a union better and closer than any possible in this world, free from every taint of grossness

or selfishness, glorified in the big love of God Himself, we shall somehow answer word with loving word and give back smile for smile.

5.

But we belong to a very large family at the altar and so look forward to something wider than the reunion of those who have spoken together in this world. We look forward to the bringing into the Kingdom of God of all nations. There is only one humanity, and one Redeemer of Humanity and one eternal Home. Already we see our longing accomplished by a kind of representation. At this very hour round earth's altars are assembled men and women, white and black, yellow and red. They are all together with us possessed by these common longings. They have each and all their special treasures to bring into the Kingdom. And yet the majority are still outside. The glory is postponed, the radiance lingereth, because, as yet, all are not with us. The altar sums up in its invitation all our longing, and we cannot be content while any members or tribes or peoples of the human race are outside the Christian fellowship, cannot cease to pray and long and labour while Our Saviour's Heart is still bereft of Its full joy of welcoming all His ransomed ones. The very fullness of our own satisfac-

tion at the altar, in its Sacrifice and its Feast, must stir up within us eager looking forward to the day when we with them shall be made perfect.

6.

We look forward, too, to a worship free from all regrets and all pangs for the miseries of a sin-ridden world, when no darkness of anxiety or sorrow shall any longer overshadow, as it so often now does, our Eucharistic gladness. We know Our Saviour, and that His great love cannot fail of its perfect work. At the altar we see Him perpetually pleading, and so we look forward with confidence to a state summed up in pregnant words, "when sin shall be no more."

7.

It seems to have been a chief part of Our Lord's intention that we should live in the continual expectation of His coming again among us in visible presence. Each celebration of the Holy Eucharist will have as one of its results the intensifying of our expectation. We train ourselves to look forward to the service not simply as part of our religious routine, but as providing a great occasion. As the service goes forward, we look with eagerness for the moment when the actual words

of Consecration shall be spoken and the Lord shall come in the humility of a Sacrament to be offered for us and to be given to us. Thus an atmosphere of expectation will be maintained.

The Mass has a further purpose in its looking forward, for every offering of it has a positive value: force, virtue, goes out from the altar as we plead the precious merits of Our Saviour for the accomplishment of His Heart's longing. It is more potent than the most earnest of prayers or the most devoted of other works: it catches them all up, embracing them, giving them new worth. Thus faithful worshippers are encouraged by the knowledge that frequent and devout attendance at the Sacrifice of the altar is, not indeed a substitute for other good works, but the greatest thing we can do day by day to advance the Kingdom of Heaven and make ready the way of the Lord.

Frequent communion also keeps us personally ready. Every time we prepare to receive the Holy Food we are rightly urged to make ready as carefully as we should for death and judgment. We are going to be welcomed by the Royal Bridegroom in a closeness of union past anything else possible in this world. We are going to dwell in Him, and He in us. We are going to feed upon Him. Let us meet Him each time with the proper dispositions, and what increasing eagerness will be

ours for the final open vision of His loving presence, what a growing transformation into His likeness as self is gradually sublimated by His grace! The better we know a good friend, the more eagerly we desire to see him, the more we regret the hours of separation. In each good communion there is some realization at the heart of us of the fulfilment of the promise implied in the invitation, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is." Love feeds love. Christ's love feeds the little love we bear Him till it becomes a consuming flame of desire. "More, O Lord, more," we cry, and set ourselves more earnestly to pray, "Come, O Lord Jesus."

Soon we shall find ourselves at the altar again, looking up and following the Sacred Drama, the great Divine Action, as it goes forward. We hear, perhaps, once again the story of the Babe of Bethlehem and realize He is soon to be born amongst us on the altar. Or it is some story of the humble Carpenter, and we know there will soon be here in His Flesh One who sympathizes with the toiler and has glorified all toil. Or it is some touching story of the Divine Healer, and we know that soon He will be among us, healing the heart's wounds of the sinful and sad by His sacramental touch. Or it is a message of the Divine Teacher that falls on our ears, and we feel that He teaches best just by continuing

amongst us His life of humility and sacrifice. Or it is of His Cross and Passion the Holy Gospel tells, and we know it is no old story, but a vivid present of unfathomable love. Or it is of His glorious Resurrection or Ascension we hear, and we know that it is just because He is Risen and Ascended that He can stand among us always as the Crucified.

Yet all the time, amidst all the tenderness, we know He comes to judge. He judges between communicant and communicant: He searches to its depths every heart by the pure light of a great love. So we look forward, eager, but trembling; and it is well it should be so, for life is full of pitfalls, and we are full of weakness: we must not through a foolish self-confidence or an unjustifiable foreshortening of the time risk losing the best of all communions in the Kingdom of His love. Every grudge must be laid aside, every quarrel made up, every abuse remedied, every want supplied. Yet always there is this looking forward, always it is "till He come." And this looking forward is to Glory: the way of the Sacrament is always in that direction, but all our life long it is a way of the Cross. That is how the Eucharist teaches us to look forward, for all along the way of our future gleams a long succession of altars set in fair array and over each of them gleams a Cross.

VI

ALTAR LIGHTS—A SUMMING UP

A Mystical and Practical Reading of Revelation i, 10–20, as Applying it to the Lord's Own Service.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.

And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

I AM going to interpret this beautiful passage of the Apocalypse in a manner frankly mystical. There are other readings and other interpretations, but this one claims to be suggestive, and to have behind it a wealth of experience, ancient and modern. The author (St. John) evidently beholds things too great to express in ordinary language. Indeed, in his state of exaltation he has clearly beheld glories that could not be put into words at all. So, as he has approached his condition of ecstasy through the gates of worship, he naturally makes large use of the symbolism of worship to declare what he has seen in a manner that may convey some meaning to those to whom his message is addressed. Keeping these things in mind, I ask my readers to follow a line of thought meant to bring out some facts and lessons concerned with the Holy Communion, as

Sacrifice and as Sacrament, and as demanding a Sequel.

I.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."

All days are the Lord's Days, but Christian custom has given one specially to Him to consecrate the rest. It is for His own people. To be "in the Spirit" is to desire to worship Him. Children love to offer to a father the best gifts. They study his tastes and his times. They please him by coming when he would have them come, and offering with loving hearts suitable presents. He provides the cost every time, but they know he will value their gifts none the less for that. To bring them in the form and at the season fitting and with the right motive implies care and love, and often means a self-sacrificing setting aside of other desires. To be "in the Spirit" is to be filled with unselfish longing, to give honour where honour is due, tribute where tribute, love where love, and supremely to the Father of all. "The Lord's Day" is like a weekly birthday. On a birthday in the household everyone conspires to honour and felicitate a particular member. His name is on every tongue. Offerings come from all hands. The first place is assigned him. On the Lord's Day, above all days, the Christian Household conspires to speak His name, to tell His praise,

to "Do" what He has commanded as the great Memorial of the Father's love in Him.

2.

"I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches . . ."

It is a call loud and insistent. It comes from One Who has the right to utter it, for He sums up all in Himself, all the love of God and all the possibilities of humanity. In Him the Father has made no reserves: He has said, "This is how I love you"; and again, "Unto this likeness I would have you grow"; and again, "The life that is in Him I would have you share." So a loud command goes out to all His children. A royal invitation is a command, and here is a more than royal invitation. It is for the "seven churches"—seven, the complete number: it is for everybody. It is an old call, yet new. It has been given since the earliest days of the Christian Church. It was honoured in the giving and in the acceptance, for all together made response. The Lord's People kept the Lord's Day by coming to the Lord's Service. They came in unbroken obedience through the centuries and always for the same purpose, to do what Jesus commanded "on the same

night on which He was betrayed." There was never even conceived the possibility of inventing a better service to replace His. Many other services supplemented it. But supreme, in the centre, crowning all the rest, always stood the Sacrifice of the Altar. As in heaven there stood "in the midst a Lamb as it had been slain," so on earth, under mystical sacramental veils, was offered the "Lamb of God," the Sacrifice of Calvary. Knowing what we know, which of us would be absent were Calvary in its original form to be set in our midst to-day and we invited to be present? Yet as truly as were that so, wherever Christian altar stands, the Crucified is with His Own in a particular way and form, and for a particular purpose which can be accomplished in no other fashion. If Holy Church has been guided by the Spirit of God, as Jesus promised, there is no thoughtful man who professes allegiance to her, but must hear and respond to the kindly, insistent invitation of the great Trumpet Sunday by Sunday, "Come and join your brethren in His Holy House and 'Do This' for Christ's Memorial."

3.

"I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst, one like unto the Son of man. . . ."

There those candlesticks stand eloquent of the meaning of His coming Who is the Light

of the World, the Revealer of the Father's ineffable love—ineffable yet, divine paradox, told at last in Him Who is the Word of God. In early days these lights shone in a dark place, figuratively and often literally, too, twinkling through the shades of night that hung round many an early altar. They must from the first have had symbolic eloquence. At first no cross or crucifix stood among them. All felt they had with them the very Crucified Himself, and needed no outward representation to assist their sense of His Presence. But by degrees it was realized that the symbol would be a help, and so the central candlestick, it is said, was removed, and first a cross, and later often a crucifix, took its place, to speak to simple and learned that this is the place and, when these lights burn around, this is the hour when the Light of the World, Jesus Crucified for men, presents Himself again and again, and yet in continuous pleading; He lets us "put the Father in mind" by showing the death of Him, the Son, to remind Him that He so loved us as to give this priceless gift. It is as when we put a dear benefactor in mind again and again of some great thing he has done for us, as though, to say in doing so, "That is the kind of man I know you to be." We say thankfully to God, "You remember, You gave us your Son to be crucified for us: that is the kind of God

we know You to be: so we adore You." Here are we, then, in the light of the *Seventh* Greater Candlestick, enlightened Christians, coming ever at the hour, in the place, with the Gifts, which He appointed, to do His will and glorify the Father.

4.

(*The Son of Man*) "*clothed with a garment down to the feet, girt . . . with a golden girdle, his head and his hairs, . . . white as snow. His eyes as a flame of fire. . . .*"

Here is the one true Priest. All earthly priests but represent this Priest, lending their lips and eyes and hands and knees and voices for His use. His raiment is altogether priestly, ample, and comely. It is spotlessly clean and white, for His innocence is perfect. He has passed through fierce temptation and fiery trial: He has come forth with unsullied purity. He uplifts holy hands. He presents a holy heart.

His girdle is of pure gold, for He has worth, riches incalculable: it is the Son of God Who offers. He made His offering of old in the life and death of the Man Who laboured and taught and loved and was persecuted and rejected. He presents the same Offering to-day under the outward forms of Bread broken and Wine poured out. It is the same Sacrifice: it is of infinite Preciousness. It is of such

worth that it is all-worthy even of the Father's acceptance. It is thus we are enabled most truly to "give unto God the glory due unto His Name."

"*His head and his hairs as white as snow.*" Yes, for He stands as the High-priest of humanity from the beginning. Every true sacrifice is caught up by Him. But this Christian Sacrifice in particular is old as the Church itself. In ordaining the Apostles, the first Christian Ministers, Our Lord said, "Do This." So for nigh two thousand years He has been standing, the perfect Priest, offering the One true Sacrifice. His "white head" is not without significance. Here is Something time-honoured, invariable, steadfast amid centuries of change, the only unchangeable of the Church's oblations. But He has "*eyes of flame.*" Though old, he is not feeble. He is perpetually young, full of keenness and enthusiasm. He has lost no faith in the Father's quenchless love, no hope of man's potentialities. He has all the eagerness of one just beginning a noble quest, allied with the steadfastness of ripe experience of the fruits of true sacrifice. He meets no new age with the sigh of weariness. His "eyes of flame" kindle afresh at every Consecration, greet and inspire every first communicant and every priest first celebrating the Holy Mysteries, light to a new hope of thousands of tired priests

ready to be daunted by age-old difficulties, crowds of worshippers jaded and discouraged by the dusty ways of common life.

5.

"*He has feet of burnished brass.*"

Yes, He has the feet of one who can march forward on a long journey, against strong foes, to all places. Days come and go in the life of the earthly priest, both lay and clerical. The greatest of tests is perhaps just this, steadfastness at the altar. Life goes by with an almost monotony of failures and disappointments. Great schemes end in smoke. Comrades grow weary and fall out by the way. Some turn to novelties for a new sensation to tickle their effete imaginations. Communions grow rarer. Celebrations are abandoned. The true priestly hearted man marks Him with the feet of burnished brass, Who marches down the ages to each new altar that is reared and decked. Great foes arise who scorn the Holy Name, cunningly divide brother against brother, in a day or two upset the efforts of a century, whisper or shout despair. Our High-priest comes amidst it all with feet untiring, and calls His own to rally round.

His Church is wide-flung on earth. In great teeming cities (alas, often so self-sufficient as being the all- and almost the only-

important), in the far country lanes, in the depths of remote continents, in the wind-swept islands of distant seas, on board many a vessel tossing on the vasty deep—His altars stand. Who is sufficient to preside at such a multitudinous worship? Why, He of the feet of burnished brass, Who fares over land and sea, mountain and desert, to make effectual the mystic words spoken in many tongues. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

6.

"His voice as the sound of many waters."

We know that full and rich sound of many waters tumbling down deep gorges or swelling up in might against a rocky shore as the Seer in Patmos must often have heard it. It is significant of both music and power. He speaks for all of humankind to God, and from God to man. From God He sends perpetually by priestly voice the invitation: "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins . . . draw near and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort." He calls to "lift up our hearts," to "give thanks unto our Lord God." He bids us gird on our armour as knights of Holy Church. O, He has many a word

that rings out from the altar for young and old, eager and world-weary, that makes all life for them a new thing. Nor less does the "voice as the sound of many waters" express man's desires Godwards, so as to make ring in the ears of all men and angels the supreme praises of the Father of all, from Whom comes down every good and perfect gift, especially that most perfect gift of all, His own dear Son; to send up to the throne on high the adoration of millions of worshippers whose chief joy is to stand in the Divine Presence; to present the vows of allegiance of the humblest who secretly give themselves to God.

7.

"In His right hand seven stars."

There is almost the suggestion of the ring that was early used to mark the priestly hand that offered, flashing with gems. Yet here is a better glory. Here is a Hand that bears the jewels of wound-prints for us. The son grown to wisdom, child of a mother who was early widowed, and in poverty toiled to give him a good start in the world, kneels to kiss the poor worn and hardened hands, witnesses of years of devoted sacrifice. No jewels that adorn other women's hands can in his eyes compare with these marks of toil in his mother's. At all

our altars stands the Saviour, and with the scarred Hands of Calvary *takes* and *breaks* and *blesses* and *distributes*. O, there is always the visible earthly priest to perform the "Manual Acts" of the service; but he knows, as all the worshippers should know, that the real consecrating Hands are the same as those that at Calvary's little green hill were stretched out for the nailing. The same love moves their stretching out now as then. Truly they are hands of star-like glory, and faith's eyes can see them every time glisten and shine as Host and Chalice are lifted up.

8.

"Out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword."

For us in this connection this is the sword of consecration. We have come to the very central moment of our Holy Service. On the altar stands the Bread, carefully prepared, duly offered, reverently ordered. There, too, is the Chalice, fair and comely, and in it sparkles the wine destined for the Mysteries.

By the power of the Holy Spirit words are spoken that bring a change, not magical, but spiritual. We are going to show a Death, the Sacrifice of the Lord on Calvary. He is not to suffer physically another Crucifixion, but His Crucifixion is to be re-presented. "The twoedged sword" is applied in a mystic

slaying as "This is My Body" and "This is My Blood" are pronounced in their appointed setting. The Sacred Victim is now with us in a special manner. Those who approach the altar will find now, not mere bread and wine, but will "Verily and indeed take and receive the Body and Blood of Christ." The Body and Blood were separated in the death of the Cross, and here in a separate Consecration of Bread and Cup the Death is shown. That Death was eloquent as nothing else could be of the unfathomable love of God to man. This showing of the Death by the application of the mystical sword of consecration tells as nothing else can do our appreciative praise and thanks for God's wondrous love.

9.

"His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

Moses came down from the Holy Mount after his speech with God, and, though He saw God not, yet his face shone with a glory so intense that he needs must veil it from the eyes of Israel. The Son of God, our High-priest, beholds in the inner sanctuary the Father face to face, Himself the very image of the Father. Long, long ago He came to earth to live amongst us, but He veiled His glory in the robes of our flesh and blood. Only for a moment, at the Transfiguration, to

a chosen few, did He even partially unveil His Countenance, and even then the light was so blinding that they fell on their faces before Him and were sore afraid. So at the holy altar He reflects fully the Father's love, but in mercy hides the brightness beneath the sacramental veils, yet not so entirely, but that in many places devout worshippers have beheld a visible glory; and in no place are the true-hearted left without some feeling of a glow that dims the brightness of earth's splendour. To some, such an experience has been the one remaining glow in a world all dark, the glow that has saved from absolute despair.

10.

"When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead."

Always when the presence of God is specially felt men have experienced a great sense of awe. This feeling probably lies at the very root of all religion. The greatest and most thrilling moments demand silence. We notice this in the pauses of a powerful and moving drama. In the greatest of all dramas, the drama of Calvary, after the raucous cries of the Lord's foes at the nailing and Our Saviour's first spoken words from the Cross, darkness and a great hush descended. The destiny of mankind was decided in that silence. For many ages and in many places it has been

the custom to clothe part at least of the Consecration in a great hush. The voice of the celebrant seems naturally solemnized by the greatness of the words he is to utter, conscious then most of all, perhaps, that he is speaking for Christ. The worshippers make a special effort to cease from all restless movements or disturbing sounds. In what to many is every time a thrilling silence, they grow as it were dead to the world of sense, and touch for an instant the very life of God. The highest adoration of the heart's love is presented in a wordless oblation that yet is eloquent as a strong man's tears by his mother's grave; a bride's shy joy at her first kiss; the first hand-clasp of friends reunited after long parting.

II.

"He said, Fear not . . . I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore . . . And have the keys of hell and of death."

The silence is broken. Life must have utterance and action. Our service is not of the dead, but of the living. We show the Death of Christ, but not a dead Christ. A Christ always dead would be a defeated Christ. Our Christ was dead, but is alive again: He liveth for evermore, and He "opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers." It is the voice of One Who triumphs Who sounds His

message in our ears. There is always the ring of Easter in His utterance. Indeed, but for this we should have no heart to show His death at all. So when He begins to speak to us, as He does to many just as though they saw Him standing on the altar and beheld the glow on His Face, His call is to life, and life more abundant. He calls not to a far-away life eternal, but to life eternal *now*, a life that has the secret of permanency because it is given to Him, filled with His love and power. So the altar is for us the wide-opened door of Paradise.

The Peri

> Who at the gate of Eden stood disconsolate.
> And as she listened to the springs
> Of life within like music flowing,
> And caught the light upon her wings.
> Through the half-open portal glowing

was cheered and comforted. And much more we are filled with life and joy unspeakable as through the wide-open door of Paradise Jesus speaks to us the wonderful words of Life.

12.

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

Any cause is furthered by the faithful witness of those who have espoused it. "I will tell

you what the Lord hath done for my soul": that should in some sense be the utterance of every Christian worshipper at the Holy Mysteries. Write it, publish it by words written or spoken. The half can never be told, yet our testimony must be borne. There is no such thing as a true worshipper who "keeps it all to himself." So we must tell something of the past, the present, the future.

"*The things which thou hast seen.*" Every devout communicant has caught some glimpse of himself, of his own unworthiness to draw near the altar of God. Indeed, the nearer he comes to the brightness of the Mystery, the more clearly stand out his own faults and shortcomings, so much so that he could not approach the altar at all did he not catch sight also of the infinite mercy of God in Christ. He sees in Christ God and sinners reconciled. He sees the offer for himself of cleansing through the Precious Blood. As God moves him, he seeks such cleansing, and comes shriven, with a new robe of pardon and acceptance upon him, to the Table of the Lord. That is his past.

"*The things which are.*" The present, the glorious present, is the precious time spent at the altar when there takes place the great act of Communion; as the outward Forms touch the Body, the Lord Himself unites the wor-

shipper to Him in closest, tenderest embrace. It is a strange experience: there is nothing like it on earth. Sometimes it takes place in an atmosphere of calmness, with almost absolute impassivity on the part of the communicant. There may be no more consciousness than just the sense, "This is God's will for me." Or there may be rapturous times when a great warm glow of joy passes through and thrills the whole being. One communion is as good as the other. It is enough to know by the certainty of faith that here and now Jesus is feeding me with His own Sacred Life. Yet what a present! God the Son in His own Body and Blood comes to me all unworthy and, in a closeness passing the closeness of all earthly unions, makes Himself one with me, and me one with Him. These are "the things which are"; this is the marvellous present.

"*The things which shall be hereafter.*" The true communion is always fruitful. The communion that ends at the altar is a sacrilege. Wherever the life of Jesus is it demands scope. Now the future of the devout communicant is to give Our Lord scope. I am called to Christian living, to a positive putting forth of the energy and power that has come to me in a greater gentleness of speech, charity of judgment, generosity of action. I am fed by Jesus to live for Jesus. Forth from the altar

goes a sacramental host with power enough any day to change the whole world around them; and, indeed, it is precisely in such Christian living that the best testimony is borne to the communicant's past, present, and future. "Epistles known and read of all men": there is our opportunity and call.

13.

"The seven stars are the angels."

Nowhere more than at the altar are we conscious of presences unseen yet near. We address our high act of worship to God in their holy fellowship. It is with angels and archangels that we sing our "Holy, Holy, Holy." Particular angels have particular charges. We think of our holy guardian angels who have gazed on the Divine glory in the Kingdom beyond. We think of angels of particular Churches and lands. We think of the eagerness of them all alike to praise and serve. How they must love to circle round our earthly altars, rejoicing at once to see our Christ-appointed worship rendered to God, and to note the reverence and devotion of the hosts of every nation who unite in one common Sacrifice! We fail to grasp the meaning of their ministry if we conceive of them as mere passive spectators of what is going forward. They, too, have a holy worship to offer, and

none can doubt their joy in uniting with sinners redeemed in lifting to God such a "Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" that Heaven itself cannot better it. Their attitude is first of holy reverence, a reverence in keeping with the picture of the six-winged seraphs, who use four of their wings in awe to hide both face and feet before the Divine glory. Doubtless this is a part of the explanation of that deep realization of an atmosphere of ineffable awe which masters many a true worshipper at the Lord's Sacrifice. We are affected by our companions in adoration. But the seraph-angels have two wings ready for flight. They are to serve also. Perhaps it is no dream which sees them flit from place to place amid the kneeling throngs, in great churches or where a faithful few are met to do the will of the Lord, whispering to longing hearts many a message of love and cheer and comfort. Maybe it is hence come the tears and smiles of many who bravely lift heads that bowed in sorrow and weariness and almost despair, ready now to face the years that remain in quiet confidence, even in eager hope. Good companions are they, for they know that their best service to us is just to keep us ever in memory of His wonderful love, Who gave His Son for us, of that Son Who is not untouched with the feeling of our infirmities, of the Spirit of Comfort Who makes us sharers in the Life

of Him Who has overcome our every foe, even the last enemy, Death.

14.

"The seven candlesticks are the seven churches."

The Sacrifice is over. The celebrant has closed the missal and is coming down from the altar. His lips move in the great thanksgiving, "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise Him and magnify Him for ever. O ye angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: Praise Him and magnify Him for ever. O all ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord: praise Him and magnify Him for ever." The lights on the altar are extinguished. There burns no lamp in the dimness round the holy place save perhaps one faint spark that speaks a "Presence all Divine." One by one, or in a trouping multitude, the people rise from their knees and go out into the world, to teeming streets, or quiet village, or country road with far-scattered houses. They begin to speak upon the way. Kind inquiries are exchanged. Homes are reached, and they sit down together to eat. Now is the time of testing. Is this eating and drinking together also a kind of sacrament? Do they eat and drink to the glory of God? Do they note in common kindliness the needs and tastes of

others round the board? There is some conversation: is it marked by the spirit of kindly charity? Has it any of the love of the altar language in it, any of the altar humility? Perhaps already selfishness and pride and censoriousness have crept in. Yet here are the "seven churches," the "seven candlesticks," sent out to lighten the world. The very putting out of the candles in church was symbolic: it meant that their light was to be carried forth in a mystical sense by every worshipper to shine in the world's dark places; for all places are dark wanting the love of God in Christ.

But the common meal is presently ended, and the worshippers soon go one by one to their many occupations, to school and college, to consulting-room and study, to office and factory, to shipyard and shop, to mine and field. What of their shining now? The holy angels are still at hand. The Lord Christ, Who toiled as a carpenter and ministered in lanes and streets of Galilee and Jerusalem, is not far away. Is there any visible glow from those who but a few hours ago or less gazed up in adoration to the altar lit with candles and with the better glow of the Light of all the world? Is their light now quenched in greed, ambition, hardness, cruelty, sloth, complaining? Is this life in the world true sequel or not of the life in the holy place?

Yet here are the " seven churches," the " seven candlesticks " sent out to lighten the world.

Once more, sirens have hooted and bells have rung. Shutters are up and office-doors are closed. There is the lull of a little leisure for the toiler. Vigorous youth is out on the sports field or on the green Isis or other flowing stream. Is the game played cleanly and to God's glory? The book eagerly chosen comes down from the shelves. Is it a wholesome book, a book that can lie comfortably between Bible and Prayer Book, or is it one to hide when others are at hand? Or the theatre is reached and the curtain rings up. Is it on something that lifts up both heart and mind, or is it on something merely suggestive and clammy with the prurience of sex? Or the dance is engaged in, or game of chance, or any of the multifarious occupations of the nation's leisure. Are they innocent in themselves, and are they given no more than their meed of time, energy, and money?

Or the claim on leisure comes that is made by some of those many schemes for guiding youth or reclaiming wanderers: are we too much engaged to lend a hand? Or our material gifts or money are asked to spread the Gospel light in dark places or for any other good cause. Does our response constitute in any sense a bright spot of holy charity to gladden the Heart of Him who gave all for us?

Let us realize that it is just we, who claim in such mystic yet real wise to worship God in the Memorial Sacrifice of the altar, who are set by Our Lord to be the world's candlesticks. If our lights are dim, the world will pay little heed to our words. If our lights, alas, are quenched in life's common temptations, can we wonder if men mock at our holy things and lightly regard our solemnities? But if we come well prepared, truly "in the spirit on the Lord's Day"; lift our all to God, our life and talents, our friends and occupations; open wide the doors of our hearts to let Him in; listen for what the Lord God would say to us in that holy hour; mark the whispers of the holy angels; depart from the altar as Christophers, Christ-bearers; what a change could be made in our environment, dependent in that case, not on mere human efforts or resolves, but on the life in us of the Son of Man, Who fulfils in us His priestly work for His brethren, His eyes aflame in ours with an eager enthusiasm for the good to be got out of all humanity; His shining feet in our feet unwearied in seeking the lost sheep of His fold; His voice as of many waters speaking by our voices with accents of a winning tenderness and pity and power; His wound-scarred Hands working by our hands countless deeds of mercy in street, in home, in hospital; His sword of consecration cutting off our lives from the

corrupt uses of selfishness and greed; His face in our faces looking up and, in the glow beyond all understanding which we behold, revealing, at least to some around us, the secret that alone makes life worth living, the secret that God is love.

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